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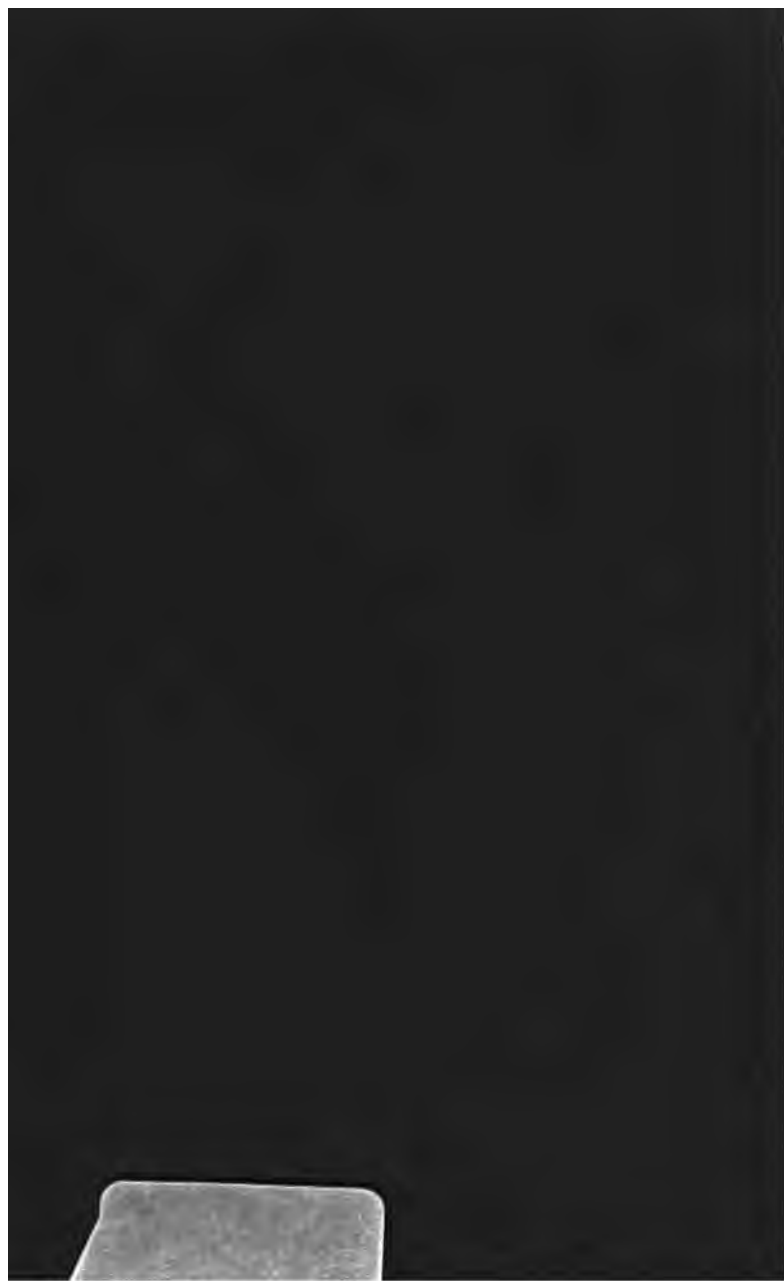
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Top for the Sorrowful

W. B. E. N. 1870





JOY FOR THE SORROWFUL;

OR,

COMFORT IN SICKNESS, CALAMITY, AND
BEREAVEMENT.

With Passages, Introduced and Introductory,

BY THE

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(OXON.)

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CHRIST CHURCH, NORTH BRITTON.

"HOPE THOU IN GOD."

Second Edition.

A. M. PIGOTT,

ALDINE CHAMBERS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND
KENNINGTON PARK CORNER, LONDON.

, 1856.

141. d. 200.



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WHAT changes are ever evident around us—in man, in nature, in circumstance! Nothing here is stable and unvarying. In man we find the helplessness of infancy exchanged for the buoyancy of youth; the buoyancy of youth for the energy and activity of manhood; the energy of manhood for the decrepitude and infirmity of age. The stream of time rolls on, and on its waves the human being is borne along till the great and final change arrives. In nature we discover the same varying characteristics. The flower that, in all-blooming beauty, unshrouds its varied hues and emits its delightful perfumes, smitten by the blast and broken by the furious wind, droops, withers, and dies. The calm and waveless lake, mirroring on its placid surface the blue expanse of heaven, is aroused from its sleep by the howling blast, and, whitened by the shattered billows, which exhaust themselves in foam, pours its waters on its rugged shores, beneath a blackened sky. The streamlet, which in summer threaded its almost noiseless way amid the disordered rocks which easily impeded its course, is changed by the rains and snows of winter into the roaring and destructive torrent. The propitious gale, which with friendly aid urged forward our speeding

bark, and seemed to whisper in the ear, in softest accents, that was all fair and promising—that no anxiety need occupy the mariner's mind, no dark foreboding cast its gloom upon his brow—increases in its tones, till the loud howling rouses all to activity and watchfulness, and proclaims the dread reality, that the tempest is gathering round our vessel. In circumstances also we read the same great truth. In social station, in domestic happiness, in political popularity, in mercantile position, all undergo their variations. The noble are degraded, the rich are impoverished, the family is bereaved, the politician is distracted. The one flattered to-day is rejected to-morrow; the wealthy of this year becomes the ruined of the next; the happy home, full of merriment and mutual love, is invaded by death, and the night of sorrow settles in deep darkness upon the weeping survivors. In such a season, friendship is precious. Its voice is sweet; its words are notes of consoling music. They may partake of melancholy, yet they are the accents of sincerity; they lighten up the dreary solitude, and tell us we are not forlorn and forgotten. These "songs in the night" sound, too, the more pleasantly, if, in addition to the present sweetness, they tell of the prospect of a brighter future, and assure us that the night is not without its star of hope—that the morning cometh.

As a friendly visitor to you in the midst of your anguish and your sorrow, we desire this book to come. It pretends to nothing; it simply desires to speak a word of consolation to your wounded spirit. To find the balm, it has dug deep into the rich mines of men whose hearts

were moved by the Spirit of God, and who, as the sons of God, had themselves experienced the trial of affliction, and found the only solace to yield comfort in these seasons of grief. When you are alone, my readers, this book desires to be with you, that ye may enjoy the companionship of men who have sought to do men good, and some of whom, though dead, yet speak. They have gathered their consolations from the unchanging Word of God, and would woo you to that word, to glean sweet passages for yourselves. The air is sent from heaven; and men have composed their variations to that air, still retaining as the substance of them the heaven-sprung melody. Like our Lord and Master, then, we hear the sad intelligence that Lazarus is dead, and would hasten like him to the home of Martha and Mary, and with them mingle the tributary tears of sorrow.

We desire, in this our book, to bring Jesus to the mourner's home, and there to leave him sitting by the mourner's side; that the poor sorrower may listen to his voice of compassion and of mercy, and may learn from his lips the sweet assurance—"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Tempest-tossed and in fear, we would have you hear in the midst of your trials the voice of a loving Saviour—"It is I; be not afraid.' I have sent, believer, this bereavement; I have cast the cloud before your pathway; I have roused the billows, so that they almost overflow you: but I am he also that, when my purpose is achieved, will say, 'Peace; be still.'"

Oh what a calm will yours then be! Your safety is secured. "Ye have suffered with me here, ye shall reign with me hereafter."

Mourner, ours is a work of sympathy and love. We feel for your distress, and we desire to alleviate it. Accept, then, this basket of selected flowers. In it you will find, as best and fairest, richest in perfume and most influential in refreshing your dejected spirit, the Rose of Sharon. Keep this constantly before you, and cherish it most fondly. It has proved itself to be in all times the "consolation of Israel." In it you will find the Lily of the Valley. Contemplate it. Its place where found is humble; and imitate it here. It droops its head, indeed; and He whom it figures to us, when all was accomplished, "bowed his head," and so must we, in full resignation to the will of God. In it ye will find the Vine; seek to extract from its precious fruit the wine of spiritual consolation, "which maketh glad the heart of man." In it ye will find the Tree beneath whose shadow the believer sits with great delight, and whose fruit is sweet unto his taste. Take up this blessed position, and eat this nourishing food. If ye are brought by your affliction to find spiritual consolation and spiritual experience, the dark day will be a day of transport, joy, and triumph to you. It may be the day of your selection from amidst the crowds of the godless and the thoughtless, by the great Disposer of all events. It may fulfil in your case those words of the prophet Zechariah—"It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." Accept our offering of sympathy and love. Peruse its pages; and while

ye do, forget not the throne of grace, but plead with God that the sentences herein contained may emit sweet fragrance.

Go, book, then, and float far and wide! Pilot it, O God, to the homes where the waters of affliction have "come in unto the soul." Direct the mind of the mourner to select the passage that best can still the anguish. Accompany it always with thy Holy Spirit, that it may accomplish effectually its mission; for without the co-operation of the Spirit, all is vain. May that Spirit which, as the wind, bloweth where it listeth, carry on its wings these rich perfumes, and, bearing them into the mourner's heart, which is desolate and sad, make it as a palace rich in eastern fragrance! May it silence by the strains of consolation the wailings of anguish and despondency, and give the key-note to the loud anthems of praise which the believer, in his full trustfulness of God, pours out even from the gloomy darkness of the sick chamber! Make the advent of this book to the sorrower's home a blessing; and grant that the great result of this gathering of these gems from the treasury of Christian writings may be, the awakening true spiritual joy in the heart of the sorrowful, and the advancement of thy glory by the evidenced resignation of the afflicted to thy will! "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will towards men!"

JAMES McCONNEL HUSSEY.

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JOY FOR THE SORROWFUL.

I.

YOU have heard of the reasons of the happiness of the wicked in this life: but it is not so with God's children, for they must mourn in this vale of tears, while the world rejoiceth; and as the wicked are filled and fatted with worldly happiness and plenty against the day of wrath, so God's children must be prepared and fitted with afflictions for the glory which shall be revealed. They are shortly to become inhabitants of that great and glorious city, whose foundations are precious stones, whose gates are margarites, whose streets are pure gold, as the shining glass; they must be companions of the blessed angels, and stand in the presence of that great and sacred Majesty; and therefore in this life they must be cast into the Lord's furnace, that in the fire of affliction they may be more and more purified

from earthliness and corruption, and so with holiness and humility prepared for that high perfection of heavenly beauty, glory, and bliss. Let every godly man, then, with comfort and benefit undergo those crosses which the Lord layeth upon him; for they are unto him as looking-glasses, wherein God sees his faith and dependence upon his providence—the world, his patience and constancy—himself, the spots of his soul, his decays of grace, the breaches of his conscience, his neglect of the duties of his calling, his coldness in religious services, his fall from his first love; so that by them God is pleased and glorified, others edified and instructed, himself humbled, recovered by repentance, and more sanctified.

R. BOLTON.

II.

No, my brethren, religion alone can truly console us in our misfortunes. Philosophy checked complaints, but it did not soften the anguish. The world lulls cares, but it does not cure them; and, amidst all its senseless pleasures, the secret sting of sadness always remains buried in the heart. God alone can comfort our afflictions; and is another necessary to a faithful soul? Weak creatures! you may easily, by vain speeches, and by that customary

language of compassion and tenderness, make yourselves to be understood by the ears of the body; but there is none but the God of all consolation who can speak to the heart. In the excess of my pains I have vainly sought consolation among ye. I have sharpened my sufferings, while thinking to soften them, and thy vain consolations have been to me only fresh sorrows.

Great God, it is at thy feet that I mean henceforth to pour out all the bitterness of my heart. It is with thee alone I mean to forget all my grievances, all my sufferings, all creatures. Hitherto I have given way to chagrins and to sadness altogether human; a thousand times have I wished that thy wisdom were regulated by the mad projects of my heart; my thoughts have wandered; my mind hath formed a thousand delusive dreams; my heart hath pursued these vain phantoms. I have longed for higher birth, more fortune, talents, fame and health; I have lulled myself in these ideas of an imaginary happiness. Fool that I am! As if I were capable of altering at my pleasure the immutable order of thy providence! As if I had been wiser or more enlightened than thee, O my God, upon my true interests! I have never entered into thine eternal designs upon me. I have never considered the sorrows of my situation as entering into the order

of my eternal destination ; and, even to this day, my joys and my sorrows have depended upon the created alone ; consequently my joys have never been tranquil, and my sorrows have always been without resource. But henceforth, O my God ! thou shalt be my only comforter ; and I will seek, in the meditation of thy holy law, and in my submission to thine eternal decrees, those solid consolations which I have never found in this world, and which, in softening our afflictions here below, secure to us at the same time their immortal reward hereafter.

MASSILLON.

III.

No act of Jesus was finished when it was done, but it was significant of a greater act yet to be. All things, I believe, are far more typical than we think them ; all facts are pregnant with effects yet more glorious than these. There is no such thing as a dead fact—it is always living and prolific ; and whatever Jesus did, especially, was significant of something yet brighter and better that Jesus will do. So, then, the fact that he quelled the storm is only an earnest of that better day, when the great Peacemaker will come forth like the high priest from the holy of holies, and screw up creation's strings to

their primeval harmony, bring all things back to their Eden bliss, give the wind and waves and sea a new and divine commission, recover and resume the sceptre, expel the disturber, reverse the curse, strip Nature of her ashen garments in which she has wept and groaned, a penitent and a sufferer, and put on her coronation robes, her bridal apparel—when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and all nature shall be made glad.

DR. CUMMING.

IV.

AND yet the worst of evil that happen to the godly is better, temporally better, than the greatest external felicity of the wicked. “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear?” If it be hard with good men, with the evil it shall be far worse. But see the difference. The godly man is timorous, and yet safe; tossed by the seas, and yet at anchor; impaired by evil accidents, and righted by divine comforts; made sad with a black cloud, and refreshed with a more gentle influence; abused by the world, and yet a heir of heaven; hated by men, and beloved by God; loses one house, and gets a hundred; he quits a convenient lodging-room, and purchases a glorious country; is forsaken by his

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friends, but never by a good conscience ; he fares hardly and sleeps sweetly ; he flies from his enemies, but hath no distracting fears ; he is full of thought, but of no amazement. It is his business to be troubled, and his portion to be comforted ; he hath nothing to afflict him, but the loss of that which might be his danger, but can never be his good ; and in the recompense of this he hath God for his father, Christ for his captain, the Holy Ghost for his supporter ; so that he shall have all the good which God can give him. And of all that good he hath the Holy Trinity for an earnest and a gage, for his maintenance at the present and his portion to all eternity.

BP. JEREMY TAYLOR.

V.

HE that now goeth on his way of this life weeping, and beareth good seed, watered with his tears of godly sorrow, from whence the worthy fruits of true repentance grow, shall doubtless come again with joy, in the life to come, “and bring his sheaves with him” ; the fruits of his good works being treasured up in the granary of heaven.

BP. SHERLOCK.

VI.

HAS adversity overtaken you? That converse with an ever present God, which in prosperity was your high duty, becomes now more especially your high privilege.

Your mind is agitated by various evils, with which you feel unequal to cope. Honest and patient industry may have failed to give you the return for your labours which you reasonably hoped; and your worldly possessions have been diminished, you scarcely know how—making themselves wings and fleeing away. Friends whom you loved as your own soul, and long trusted as your own heart, may have proved faithless; or you may yourself, by some ill advised counsel, or your own erring judgment, have surrounded yourself with perplexities. The world's flattering smile is withdrawn. But are you therefore to consider your life as a state of darkness and gloom? God forbid! Light is still sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Still "rejoice in the Lord." You are privileged by your Christian covenant to seek the favour of Him whose favour is better than life. God is your refuge. In the holy calm of retirement, fail not to hold converse with him and your own soul; and if the Psalmist's mournful reflection speak the language of your *grief*—"Why

art thou so *heavy*, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?" let his consequent resolve be the language of your *faith*—"O put thy trust in God! I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God!" Exercise your privilege of access to him, through the Saviour, Christ Jesus the Lord. *Fear not!* However your joy be now changed into sorrow, the love of your heavenly Father knows no change—no passing cloud which the world interposes can dim the brightness of his favour. His love and favour veer not with the shifting seasons of good or ill fortune. He loves alike the rich and the poor, the prosperous and the unfortunate—if, like Abraham and Lazarus, they each in their state of life exercise faith and patience, and, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things."

Delay not, then, in this the sad season of adversity, to draw nigh unto thy God. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Cling to him as to a present, sure friend; flee to him as a bird to its covert, when storm and tempest rage.

The benefit of this religious meditation will soon be evidenced in a patient submission to the severest trials. By reflecting upon the nature of that God whom the gospel reveals to you, and to whom you now look for succour, you learn that afflictions and

sorrows are neither the result of chance, nor the tokens of divine anger. You learn that they are the declared tokens of love from the everlasting Father, who afflicts us for a time here that we may be prepared for a glorious eternity hereafter. You learn that all things, even the most trivial, which can happen to us individually, are as clearly known to him and as surely permitted by him as the more important events which affect the world at large. The mere blade of grass under our feet, and the gorgeous heavens above us, are equally the work of his hands and the object of his care. You cherish this truth, and you derive a comfort from it which all your prosperity never gave you; for you then perhaps *forsook* the counsel and sought not the converse of your God. You were as one in a thirsty land, where no water refreshed you: you *then* sought not the *fountain*—what wonder that you found not the waters?

When God is in all our thoughts, we may be poor, even to destitution; we may be borne to the dust by contempt and ignominy; fallen in man's esteem, we may have become objects of his scorn: yet "shall not our heart be afraid." The patriarch's submission will fill our hearts: "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." We know that "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord."

Following the steps of the blessed Jesus, we no longer marvel that we are called to bear our cross; we have been taught that such is the appointed condition upon which his disciples hope to follow him to his glory. The Apostle's language, therefore, speaks the steady courage of a faithful soul—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair." Almighty God, who "despiseth not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful," giveth us his grace, whereby we derive strength to bear up under our troubles, and patiently to await their removal, when and as it may please the Disposer of all things. To him, after the example of our Divine Master, we have carried our sorrows; and he, having compassion upon our infirmities, has strengthened *us* by his *Spirit*, as he strengthened by his *angel* the *Son*, in whom he was well pleased.

J. JAMES.

VII.

ALL the saints have profited by tribulations.

BP. JEREMY TAYLOR.

VIII.

LORD! I would, I do submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee.
What thy wisdom sees most fit,
Must be surely best for me.

Only, when the way is rough,
And the coward flesh would start,
Let thy promise and thy love
Cheer and animate the heart.

NEWTON.

IX.

WHEN thou art not able to contemplate the high mysteries of redemption and the wonders of the glorified state, think on the passion of Christ, and let thy soul dwell securely in his most holy wounds: for if, in the severest tribulation, thou canst devoutly fly for refuge to the wounds and stripes of Jesus, thou wilt find abundant strength and comfort; and wilt be so far from being disturbed by the contempt of pride, that thou wilt bear with meekness and tranquillity the most envenomed shafts of calumny.

Christ was rejected of men, and, in the extremity of distress, forsaken by his disciples and friends.

Christ chose to suffer thus, and to be thus deserted and despised; and dost thou complain of injury and contempt from others? Christ had enemies and slanderers; and wilt thou have all men to be thy friends and admirers? How can thy patience be crowned in heaven, if thou wilt have no adversity to struggle with on earth? Canst thou be the friend and follower of Christ, and not the partaker of his sufferings? Thou must therefore suffer with Christ, and for his sake, if thou indeed desirest to reign with him.

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

X.

“As for me, I was even as a deaf man, and heard not; and as one that is dumb, that doth not open his mouth.”

“I became as one that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.”

“I will patiently bear my reproach, because I have sinned against the Lord.”

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.”

“It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord; if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!”

“For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you take it patiently? But if when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.”

SHERLOCK.

XI.

SUPPOSE, then, that your particular trial be the bearing the enmity of those who are set against you, “without any offence or fault of you,” let it be your care that you give them no reasonable cause of anger or hatred. If they pretend to find occasion against you, let it be with you as with Daniel, that they find none occasion, *except* in your faithful adherence to your religious duties. In that case, it were easy to bear even the despitefulness of the proud patiently. You will view it no longer only as the cruelty of man, but as the *will* of God; and *so viewed*, the effect of it on your peace and comfort is not, what your enemy intended, to destroy them. You understand, with the

Psalmist, that the sorrow in question is but one of those numerous modes of trial by which God proves the children of men. You pity the ungodly, even while they persecute and provoke you to anger. Your mind is now convinced that wicked men, whilst they dishonour God and injure their neighbour, though they must bear their own iniquity, are yet made instruments to further the very object they purpose to overthrow. They are used as instruments in the hand of God to chastise the children whom he loveth, and thus afford opportunity to the righteous to give higher evidence of their *faith*. The prayer of the afflicted still is—"Deliver my soul from the *ungodly*, which is a *sword of thine*."

What an entire and happy change of feeling is wrought in you by *thus* viewing the malice of an enemy! Not only does pity usurp the place of anger, but you pray for him who curses you. Well may you pray for him! What if he be rich in worldly wealth, or high in worldly station; he is poor in spiritual riches—he is indeed low in spiritual hope. Vain, perhaps, of his fancied superiority, ingenious in devising plans for giving pain—powerful, from his wealth or influence, to tyrannize over his neighbour, and exhibit all the evil feeling which united envy and malice generate—you view him only as the unwilling instrument of good, in the hands of that Being

to whom you address yourself in the appropriate words of David—"The fierceness of man shall turn to thy praise, and the fierceness of them shalt thou refrain." Oh, how is this proud and vain and boastful spirit lowered! He thought to disquiet thee in thy new and amended course of life; and by despising *thee*, to show disregard to the Divine Master, whom thou servest. He is disappointed of his hope—God makes him to work *good*, leaving to him the awful responsibility of his will to work evil. You have benefited by his enmity; for you have drawn nearer to your God. Your aim is heaven; and no lower consideration, whether of good or ill, can divert an aim whose object here is peace—hereafter, glory. The sting of all unkindness is drawn, when received in this spirit of Christian courage, because the feeling of *individual* wrong is withdrawn. An enemy strikes a blow at our good name, perhaps, or our worldly advancement. His object is to give pain. *Faith* is our shield to quench this fiery dart. We believe that though he hurls the dart for our harm, a greater than he shall direct it for our good. Wisely looking higher than our individual wrong, we repose, in faith, upon "that goodness" which God "hath prepared for them who love him, even before the sons of men." We can ever appeal to that Being in the firm language of David—"Thou shalt hide us privily by thine own

presence from the provoking of all men : thou shalt keep us secretly in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues."

Thus restored to health of body and of soul, you go on your way rejoicing. Do enemies beset you in your new path of life—do they daily provoke—challenge you, as it were, to anger, or hatred, or ill will, or any other sin? They tempt in vain. You have found a hidingplace—even the love of your Father who is in heaven, and the mercy of your Saviour, and the comfort of your Sanctifier. In that hidingplace you remain safely. The evil speaker, the backbiter, the slanderer, the reviler, may persevere in their baseness; but there is no offence taken, consequently no retort given—no railing for railing, no "*strife* of tongues." Leaving *them* to the misery of their own hearts, *you* persevere in your patience; and God permits you to find with *him* rest, and a peace of mind "which passeth all understanding." By faith you have at length overcome the world; nay, you have achieved a nobler triumph still—you have overcome yourself.

J. JAMES.

XII.

"THEY that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall

doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." This promise is conveyed under images borrowed from the instructive scenes of agriculture. In the sweat of his brow the husbandman tills his land, and casts the seed into the ground, where for a time it lies dead and buried. A dark and dreary winter succeeds, and all seems to be lost; but at the return of spring universal nature revives, and the once desolate fields are covered with corn, which, when matured by the sun's heat, the cheerful reapers cut down, and it is brought home with triumphant shouts of joy. Here, O disciple of Jesus, behold an emblem of thy present labour and thy future reward! Thou "sowest," perhaps, in "tears"; thou doest thy duty amidst persecution and affliction, sickness, pain, and sorrow; thou labourest in the Church, and no account is made of thy labours, no profit seems likely to arise from them. Nay, thou must thyself drop into the dust of death, and all the storms of that winter must pass over thee, until thy form shall be perished and thou shalt see corruption. Yet the day is coming when thou shalt "reap in joy," and plentiful shall be thy harvest. For thus thy blessed Master "went forth weeping," a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, "bearing precious seed" and sowing it around him, till at length his own body was buried, like a grain of wheat, in the furrow of the

grave. But he arose, and is now in heaven, from whence he shall "doubtless come again with rejoicing," with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, "bringing his sheaves with him." Then shall every man receive the fruit of his works, and have praise of God.

BISHOP HORNE.

XIII.

IN all afflictions, seek rather for patience than for comfort: if thou preservest *that*, *this* will return.

BP. JEREMY TAYLOR.

XIV.

JOY, nothing but joy, is the intention of the Guide of mankind; joy, nothing but endless joy, the sole end of all the suffering laid on us. "Jesus," and "Author of joy," are perfectly equivalent expressions. To him who deems Jesus other than the author of joy, the gospel is other than glad tidings; and he who regards affliction as anything but a fountain of joy, knows not God, nor Christ, nor the gospel.

LAVATER.

XV.

LET the afflicted Christian, when sunk alike in health and spirits, and passing, it may be, out of one faint into another, endeavour to think of the Saviour's faintness on the cross. The Elder Brother, we learn, can sympathize with us even in the greatest extremity of feeling. Remember how meekly he bore his own affliction, and how tenderly he feels for the most unworthy of his brethren in their distresses. Call to mind that compassionate consideration which he exhibited, in the days of his flesh, towards the multitude that followed him (Matt. ix. 36). Hear how he speaks to his disciples: "I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way" (Matt. xv. 32). Now that he has ascended to the highest heavens, his heart is as full of sympathy as before. Whilst therefore you would desire that he should tenderly regard your present trial, direct your own attention in like manner to his former affliction. The sympathy between Jesus, the head, and your soul as a member, of his spiritual body, shall thus be consummated. The very lowest depth of your experience shall find that of Christ beneath it. Sink, then, and fail, as may both heart and flesh, the sympathy of Jesus will fail you never. Therefore let all afflicted Christians attentively, and fully, and unremittingly, "CONSIDER HIM

THAT ENDURED," lest they become wearied and faint in their mind (Heb. xii. 3). Though faint, let them be still pursuing, under the Captain of their salvation, against all their enemies (Judges viii. 4). Yea, though the outward man perish, there is no cause to faint (2 Cor. iv. 16). Even though darkness envelope them, let not their hearts despond: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. xl. 27-31).

If then, O Christian, thou faintest in the day of adversity, may we not say, "thy strength is small" (Prov. xxiv. 10)? Christ is given of God to be our strength. Lay hold on him, and thou shalt be invincible. Pray fervently to the Holy Spirit to inspire thee with the mind that was in Jesus; to impart to thee the same desires and earnest longings which filled his heart. It was not with mere pain

that he was faint; it was not with anxiety to be freed from affliction that his spirit melted: it was with intense desires after God, with unutterable emotions under his Father's withdrawal, that Christ's heart was poured out like water. We may suppose these to be his words—"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psalm lxxxiv. 2). "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, my soul followeth hard after thee" (Psalm lxiii. 1-8). This was the "one thing" which Christ desired, which he sought after. Is this also the chief happiness of your heart? Is the enjoyment of God's favour, the return of his presence of light and love, the principal subject of your prayers, the first and last object of your hopes, anxieties, and desires? Then fear not, neither despair. Weep and mourn, yet do not despond. Sow many prayers, cast forth your supplications, plant your petitions without ceasing; and in due season you shall reap, if you faint not (Gal. vi. 9).

J. STEVENSON.

XVI.

HE was a man of sorrows, who
Hath loved and saved us thus ;
And shall the world who frowned on him
Wear only smiles for us ?

No ; we must follow in the path
Our Lord and Saviour chose ;
We must not seek a restingplace
Where he knew no repose.

C. FRY.

XVII.

GOD was fain to multiply miracles to make Christ capable of being "a man of sorrows"; and shall we think he will work miracles to make us delicate? He promised us a glorious portion hereafter, to which, if all the sufferings of the world were put together, they are not worthy to be compared; and shall we, with Dives, choose our portion of good things in this life? If Christ suffered so many strange things only that he might give us glory, shall it be strange that we shall suffer who are to receive his glory? it is in vain to think we shall obtain glories at an easier rate than to drink of the brook in the way in which Christ was drenched.

BP. JEREMY TAYLOR.

XVIII.

IF thou bearest the cross willingly, it will soon bear thee, and lead thee beyond the reach of suffering, where "God shall take away all sorrow from thy heart." But if thou bearest it with reluctance, it will be a burden inexpressibly painful, which yet thou must still feel, and by every impatient effort to throw it from thee thou wilt only render thyself less and less able to sustain its weight, till at length it crush thee.

Why hopest thou to avoid that from which no human being has been exempt? Who amongst the saints hath accomplished his pilgrimage in this world without adversity and distress? Even our blessed Lord passed not one hour of his most holy life without tasting "the bitter cup that was given him to drink;" and of himself he saith, that "it behoved him to suffer, and to rise from the dead, and so to enter into his glory." And why dost thou seek any other path to glory but that in which, bearing the cross, thou art called to follow "the Captain of thy salvation"? The life of Christ was a continual cross, an unbroken chain of sufferings; and desirest thou a perpetuity of repose and joy? Thou art deceived, wretchedly deceived, if thou expectest anything but tribulation; for this mortal life is full of misery, and every part of it is inscribed with the cross.

The regenerate man, as he becomes more spiritualized, has a quicker discernment of the cross, wherever it meets him; and his sense of the evils of his exile, as the punishment of his fallen life, increases in proportion to his love of God and desire of reunion with him. But this man, thus sensible of misery, derives hope even from his sufferings: for while he sustains them with meek and humble submission, their weight is continually diminishing; and what to carnal minds is the object of terror, is to him a pledge of heavenly comfort. He feels that the strength, the life, and peace, of the new man, rise from the troubles, the decay, and death, of the old; and from his desire of conformity to his crucified Saviour, as the only means of restoration to his *first* perfect state in God, he derives so much strength and comfort under the severest tribulations, that he wishes not to live a moment without them. Of the truth of this the blessed Paul is an illustrious instance, who says of himself, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."

THOMAS À KEMPIS.

XIX.

CHRIST nourisheth his Church by sufferings. He hath given a single blessing to all other graces ; but to them that are persecuted he hath promised a double one—it being a double favour first to be innocent like Christ, and then to be afflicted like him. Without this, the miracle of patience, which God hath given to fortify the spirits of the saints, would signify nothing. As no man would bear evil without a cause, so no man could bear so much without the supporting hand of God ; and we need not the Holy Ghost to so great purposes, if our lot were not sorrow and persecution. And therefore, without this condition of suffering, the Spirit of God should lose that glorious attribute of the Holy Ghost, the *Comforter*. Is there anything more yet? Yes. They that have suffered or forsaken any lands for Christ shall sit upon the thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel: so said Christ to his disciples. Nay, the saints shall judge angels (saith St. Paul): well therefore might he say, “I rejoyce exceedingly in tribulation.” It must be some great thing that must make an afflicted man to rejoyce exceedingly; and so it was. For since patience is necessary that we receive the promise—and tribulation does work this: for a short time it worketh the consummation of our hope, even

an exceeding weight of glory. We have no reason to think it strange concerning the fiery trial, as if it were a strange thing. It can be no hurt. The Church is like Moses' bush; when it is all on fire, it is not at all consumed, but made full of miracle, full of splendour, full of God: and unless we can find something that God cannot turn into joy, we have reason not only to be patient, but rejoice, when we are persecuted in a righteous cause; for love is the soul of Christianity, and suffering is the soul of love.

BP. JEREMY TAYLOR,

XX.

THE dejection of the afflicted soul, especially under trials which involve its spiritual and eternal interests, would be profound, its disquietude would be perpetual, were it not for the existence of this hope—a hope which rests upon a sure foundation, even the promises of God, and is accordingly adequate, under whatever circumstances of trial, to the support and to the upholding of the soul. It has only two inquiries to propose, and both are satisfactorily answered in the volume of divine revelation, which is the treasury of hope: Is he who has promised worthy to be trusted? Is he who has promised able to perform? The first is answered when we are

told, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord:" the second, when we are assured that with God nothing shall be impossible; nothing, at least, except that God should lie—that he should act, that is, in contradiction to the attributes which he has declared himself to possess. It is not, therefore, whether the proposed means of endurance are adequate, for that can be questioned by none who are willing to recognize that transcript of Deity which he himself has given; but whether they are attainable—whether it is practicable to realize them for ourselves, so that they shall be available to us in the hour of need. It is evident they were thus practically applied by the Psalmist; by the holy men of old who now constitute the bright and luminous cloud of witnesses beaming over the path which leads to the paradise of God; by the apostle Paul, who even glorified in tribulation, that the power of Christ might rest upon him; and the residue of the apostolic brotherhood, who even rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame, since it was for his sake. Not only so, but here is an abiding testimony—a voice which has gone up from the Church in all ages, and which is now uttering the very same witness from many abodes of mourning, from many dwellings of desolation, from many chambers of sickness, from many beds of pain, from many

who are in heaviness through manifold temptations, and bending at this instant beneath a weight of woe which would utterly crush and overwhelm them, did they not put their trust in God. Yes, brother, Christian experience is substantially the same in every age, for Christ Jesus is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" and not only in the glorious company of the apostles, and the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs, will you find those who, while they say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath," say also, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;" and, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes:" but you will find many such in these latter days, who will be forward to testify (I have heard it again and again) that their sorrows have either brought them home to God or kept them close with God, and that in the retrospect of life they find no greater cause for gratitude than in their reverses, their bereavements, their disappointments, their trials—in that which almost made them to doubt, during the actual endurance, whether they were indeed children of God, but which has appeared to them on the review, amidst all their past experience, most demonstrative of a Father's hand, most congenial with a Father's love.

D. MOORE.

XXI.

YES, Lord! I would make this my morning, noon, and evening petition, that the great Glorifier of Jesus would gently lead me to Him who is a rock, and whose work is perfect. I know, dearest Lord, in theory, and can even reason upon it in seasons of coolness, that thy strength and thy security never fail—the failure is in me and my unbelief; and it is only when I lose sight of thee and thy promise that I am tossed about with doubts and misgivings. If Jesus be out of sight, and thwarting dispensations arise, oh how soon is my poor forgetful heart ready to exclaim, with the Church of old, “I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord”! Then come on the reasonings of flesh and blood, and then the question whether my interest in Jesus and his salvation be sure; and then my poor heart goes forth, like the dove of Noah from the ark, having lost sight of Jesus, and can find no restingplace for the sole of my foot. O Lord the Spirit, in all such seasons do thou lead me to the rock that is higher than I! If thou, blessed leader of the Lord’s distressed ones, wouldest be my pilot when those storms are beating upon me, I should soon be blown upon the firm landingplace of Jesus’ security. Oh, how should I ride out the storm, even when the tempest was highest, as long as

God the Holy Ghost enabled me to cast the anchor of faith upon this eternal rock, Jesus! O lead me, then, thou Sovereign Lord, continually to all-precious Jesus; open the port of communication, and keep it constantly open, between Christ and my soul. Faith will find a soft and quiet bed to sleep on, in the arms of Jesus, and no noise of war shall break the soul's rest while reposing on him; for so the promise runs:—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Oh, then, once again I send up the earnest cry of my soul—let it be continually answered in mercy—"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

DR. HAWKER.

XXII.

"I HAD fainted," said David, "unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Oh, yes; when trials thicken, when temptations roll in as with the force of mighty breakers on the soul, when heaviness settles upon the spirit, these are seasons when nothing can so strengthen for conflict as the power of the divine promises. But they are adapted, blessed be God, to every case and to every emergency. They speak of

God's presence in the season of affliction—"God is a very present help in trouble." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." They speak of God's power to succour the tempted—"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." For the spiritually oppressed the Scriptures have also a message of promise—"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me." It is thus that the Scriptures, through the instrumentality of the scripture promises, become effectual through the Spirit's grace to quicken, to uphold, to comfort, and to guide, the believer.

R. BICKERSTETH.

XXIII.

HOPE is the stay and solace under every trial ; but it is the instrument and the artificer of none. Nay, many things which would trouble us, while our dependence was on dust—while we built upon the shifting sand of man's promises, or leaned upon the bruised reed of man's precarious and fluctuating care, are deprived of all their power to disquiet or disturb by the simpler existence of a good hope through grace—"a hope full of immortality."

T. DALE.

XXIV.

SINGULARITY of misfortunes ought, in the eyes of faith, to be a soothing distinction. He hath always conducted his chosen, in matters of affliction as well as in other things, by new and extraordinary ways. What melancholy and surprising adventures in the life of a Noah, a Lot, a Joseph, a Moses, a Job ! Trace, from age to age, the history of the just, and you will always find in their various vicissitudes something, I know not what, of singular and incredible, which hath staggered even the belief of subsequent ages. Thus, the less your afflictions resemble those of others, the more should you consider them as

the afflictions of God's chosen ; they are stamped with the mark of the just ; they enter into that tradition of singular calamities which from the beginning of ages forms their history.

The more God afflicteth, the greater is his love and his watchfulness over you. More common misfortunes might have appeared to you as the consequences merely of natural causes ; and though all events are conducted by the secret springs of his providence, you might perhaps have had room to suppose that the Lord had no particular design upon you, in providing for you only certain afflictions which happen every day to the rest of men. But, in the grievous and singular situation in which he placeth you, you can no longer hide from yourself that his regards are fixed on you alone, and that you are the special object of his merciful designs.

Now, what more consoling in our sufferings ! God seeth me ; he numbereth my sighs ; he weigheth mine afflictions ; he beholdeth my tears to flow ; he maketh them subservient to my eternal sanctification. Since his hand hath weighed so heavily, and in so singular a way, upon me, and since no earthly resource seems to be left me, I consider myself as having at last become an object more worthy of his cares and of his regards. Ah ! if I still enjoyed a serene and happy situation, his looks would no longer be upon me ; he would neglect me, and I should be blended before him

with so many others, who are the prosperous of the earth. Beloved sufferings, which, in depriving me of all human aids, restore me to God, and render him mine only resource in all my sorrows! Precious afflictions, which, in turning me aside from all creatures, are the cause that I now become the continual object of the remembrance and of the mercies of my Lord!

MASSILLON.

XXV.

“MAN is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.” These are significant words—but words proved true by the experience of men. The earth is peopled with mourners, and various are the causes of their weeping. Here a sad heart is sorrowing over the bier of one deeply loved, and is painfully realizing the sad blank which now remains; there another is grieving over sad disaster which has befallen his worldly estate; here another is mourning over shattered health and broken constitution: nay, all around us are heard the sighs and wailings of distress, the deep-toned sounds of sorrow. To add intensity to his anguish, man summons in the aid of memory, and on its canvas repaints the scenes enjoyed before with those now gone, and so, by contrast, the painfulness of his condition the more appears, and is the more

acutely felt. What consolation is there in the midst of scenes so desolate and sad? What thought can illuminate a world so full of wailing and distress? Thou worldling, canst thou find it in all the brilliant scenes of fashion? canst thou derive it from the lips of thy companions, in the halls of revelry? Canst thou extract it from the accumulated pleasures which man's ingenuity may arrange for thy gratification? Canst thou so freeze up the heart that it will not melt under the mighty influence of grief, and discharge the tears of sorrow? O worldling, thou hast no true alleviation; thou art deprived of any real support. If thy night of sorrow has any light, that light is artificial and deceptive. It is like the moonbeam, that gives some brightness, but emits no warmth. All is chilly and unsatisfying. Afflictions, to thee, are evidences of divine wrath, the foretastes of future severity. But how different are such visitations to those who trust in God, and can say that he is their God, and that they are his people! The word of revelation, to them, is a voice of friendship. Amidst all the gloom and all the anguish, amidst all the tears and all the desolation, they rejoicingly remember the words—"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Sweet syllables, combining tears and joys—the gloom of night and the brightness of morning; for whereas, in contemplating the furnace of affliction and

all its painful accompaniments, the heart might be saddened, yet, in reflecting on the hopeful word "chosen," the spirit is gladdened, for it breathes of careful selection and sweet appropriation. And who has chosen? Not man, full of prejudice and fancy, whose feelings and love may change—not man, whose selfishness has fixed on thee to do his bidding and achieve his work—not man, whose heart has sympathized with thee merely because the deep lines of sorrow were laid upon thy face, but which condolence may quickly melt away: but that Almighty God in whom is "no variableness nor shadow of turning"—who has comforted his people by the encouraging assurance, "I am the Lord, I change not."

Where can we see this furnace, and in it find true comfort? We must go in spirit to the great scene on Dura's plain, and behold the golden image set up, and hear the mingled sounds of music—we must review the gathered throng, in simultaneous action casting themselves down before the object prepared for their adoration; and amidst the multitude we must recognize three heroes, who, faithful to their Lord and Master, would not obey the proud command of Babylon's haughty monarch. They had sworn allegiance, at the altar, to their rightful king, nor would they show themselves traitors even at such a trying moment as that before them. "Bow down before the image when ye

hear the strains of music, and it will be well for you : refuse, and the furnace shall receive your devoted bodies." Are they terrified? Do they hesitate? No. They have made their choice. They will trust their God, for they know he can deliver, if it seemeth good to him so to do. However, the threat is executed : they are cast into the midst of the flames. Terrible furnace of affliction this ; but is it without consolation? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Are these servants of the living God uttering cries of agony, and repenting of their faithfulness? Look, mourner, look and see—gather up the consolation and encouragement herein displayed : for, see ! a fourth is in the midst of the furnace, like unto the Son of God, and the noble youths are uninjured. The bold champions of their God are not forgotten, though subjected to severe calamity ; and so may all the children of our God expect that in the midst of the furnace they will find the cheering friendship and protection of the Son of God.

Into a furnace of affliction all may be cast : nay, we find that few, if any, escape the discipline of affliction. That such is our lot, is merciful ; as the great object which the Almighty has in view towards his children is mercy. Sweet words, such as these—"Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" ; and, "all things work together

for good to them that love God"—fall upon the mourner's ear, and cheer his saddened spirit. These come as stray notes from the songs of heaven, in which the beneficence, love, and sympathy of God are recorded and praised; and we gladly hail them as consoling messengers from another clime, where sorrow enters not. Let us, however, patiently and prayerfully contemplate this furnace, and from it extract consolation and resignation.

Our first inquiry will be, **Who has reared this furnace?** It is God's work. He is the all-wise architect and builder; and full is the consolation which is hence derived. The circumstances which fall out to us, are not the product of the womb of chance, for the Christian acknowledges not the existence of chance. The child of God sees the ruling hand of Deity in all things, and bends before his dispensations in a spirit of resignation.

But if God is the builder, whence from this fact spring my consolations? The right conception of God's character will beget a vast array of comforts. His wisdom conspicuously appears, and we confess he best knows what is most profitable for man; for God's views are not circumscribed as ours—he sees the past and beholds the future: all things are present with him, and his wisdom moves through all. His love walks in sweet companionship with his wisdom, and tempers all for the benefit of his people. He with-

holds nothing which is good for man ; but, moved by his flowing love, he deals out bountifully to his own beloved people. His consolations are the streams that gently fall from the fountain of his heart, and which refresh the pilgrim's wearied spirit.

But yet there might be the wisdom to plan and the love to move to action, without the power to accomplish ; and so, where in God we saw the willingness, we might be grieved at not discovering the ability. Such a painful reflection is dispelled at once, for we repose on the omnipotence of that God with whom we have to do. He has no equal ; but on his throne of universal empire sits, and by his unlimited might carries out his royal will. Before his fiat all things yield. His mightiest adversary, Satan, can only act as far as the hand of God loosens the chain, and gives him freedom. He could afflict Job no further than God saw right ; and so with all things now. Afflictions dark and dreary come : but God appoints their limits, and those bounds they cannot pass. His purpose measures the extent of the discipline ; and when the purpose is fulfilled, the word is heard—"it is enough." Whatever might lead to the infliction of severe suffering unnecessarily has no dwellingplace in our God. Men, filled with envy at the success and aggrandisement of another, might seek to strike a deadly blow at his elevation, and to hurl him from

his lofty position. The prospering breeze which had gently impelled his vessel safely forward, jealous man might desire to see changed into the howling tempest, which in its maddened fury would overwhelm the speeding bark; but no such feeling influences our God. He that has all things and can regulate all things according to his almighty will, can envy none, for all receive out of his fulness. Sweet thought! There is in God all to engender confidence in the bereaved. There is absent from the nature of God whatever might embitter the severe trial to the sufferer. Christian, rejoice in such an assurance! The furnace is reared, but it is reared in kindness; the furnace is hot, but it is regulated by love and wisdom. The furnace removes much we had before, but it is what was injurious to our real felicity. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."

Our second inquiry will be, Where does God rear his furnace? It has its locality and position, according to the necessities of the case—according to the character of visitation required by the poor sinner who needs God's discipline. It may appear rising before us where least expected, because we are guilty of undue confidence in some object. What we esteem our strongest point may be the very place where the furnace is lighted up; which fact should arouse us to diligent observation and careful self-examination.

Wherein man chiefly prides himself, there God is found humbling man—wherein man sees the greatest excellence, there God may see the mightiest evil; and so that spot the Almighty Lord assails. Give heed, then, to some of the localities where God builds up his furnace.

Before the mirror sits the thoughtless maiden. Each succeeding look adds increased self-gratification. The beauty with which God has adorned her becomes the snare; and, bewitched by the flattering tongue of Satan, she plumes herself in her exceeding loveliness. Amidst the crowded chambers of fashion, and the glittering throngs of the gay and thoughtless, she moves in the confidence of her superiority. Each word of insincere praise is accepted as her due; and upon it, with unsatisfied appetite, she feeds. Painful sight! heartrending truth! The beautiful work of God is acting in antagonism to its Maker. The sculpture is worshipped, and the skill of the Sculptor is forgotten. What is the consequence? The Sculptor's care is withdrawn, and the helpless figure is left to stranger hands. It is exposed to influences from which the Sculptor's care protected, and soon it becomes marred and mutilated. Disease may sweep across the beauteous face, and leave its immovable impress there; sickness may cast its blighting influences, and rob the cheek of all its bloom, the eye

of all its lustre. The worshipped one becomes the rejected, and the pride which elevated gives place to the deep humility which leaves the victim to her tears and solitude.

It may be that man, in proud self-complacency, feels his intellectual superiority. His words are hailed by admiring friends, as replete with erudition. Silence reigns while he speaks, and men hang upon his lips. He is the very oracle of his circle of companions, and with mental haughtiness reigns and rules. He is a tyrant in opinion, and brooks not the slightest questioning of his judgment. This despotic pre-eminence he fully revels in, and forgets that the thoughts of men, expended merely on the light and transient things of time, perish in the grave. There is measurement to his greatness: God has seen his pride, and the proud he beholdeth afar off. To humble such is God's wish, and so the furnace is reared. The intellect is smitten—its lustre is dimmed, its loftiness is bowed down; the gigantic mind becomes a mere dwarf—nay, it becomes the dwelling-place of folly. We see the childish, dreaming idiot, where we had admired the champion of intellect. Such cases may be rare, yet they have existed, and do exist. Why may they not be multiplied, if man, in his ambition after mental excellence, forgets to seek the sanctification of mind? Why may God not as well blast the

intellect as the fleshly beauty? Beware, ye proud devotees of reason, who disparage revelation! Will ye tempt God to wither up your intellectual powers, and send you howling amid the slaves of frenzy and delusion? God rears the furnace in your once admired mind.

In the scenes of busy life we see some whose faces are never missed from the crowded mart—who day by day ply their anxious calling—who dedicate all energy and time to aggrandize their earthly possessions. We admire their application, we applaud their industry; but we desire to see it in fair proportion given to God, for we feel that God's longsuffering may reach its limit, and desperate distress may descend upon their condition. The history of the men of wealth corroborates the fact, that while they were esteemed by many as having their rock immovable, and in its caves their possessions carefully hoarded, the convulsion came, the rocking earthquake heaved, and all their accumulated riches were lost. They did not recognize God's demand—"My son, give me thine heart," but yielded their affections to things beneath. The glitter of gold had greater fascination than the beauteous beams of the Sun of Righteousness; the treasures of earth had more promise in their eyes than the unsearchable riches of Christ; they served Mammon before and instead of God. So God smote; and

the mighty superstructure faded from before their once bewitched eyes, and the devotee of gold and silver leaves his noble mansion, his proud position, his flattering friends and wealthy associates, to be a wretched dependent on the store of charity. How mournful is the picture, yet how true ! The pencil of experience has often portrayed this sad reality. God reared the furnace, and in it cast thee ; but has it not been the moment of his choice, and thy unchangeable happiness ? Hast thou not found thy time of need was God's time of love ? Prosperity reared on a sandy foundation has been exchanged for that built on the everlasting rock ; the semblance of happiness has given way to the substance of real felicity. The trial is severe, yet the result is glorious ; the discipline is painful to flesh and blood, yet the issue is transcendent victory !

What sounds of merriment fall upon our ear ? Let us approach the cheerful company, and see whence come these happy tones. In full domestic felicity and joy we find an united family. Each member is required to render its symmetry complete. Take out one stone, and we imagine the whole building will be marred. We delight to contemplate so much apparent happiness, and might deem it severe to destroy the transport. However, there is sin. Thoughtlessness reigns amidst them ; forgetfulness of their God is painfully visible ; and so they

stand in imminent peril. We, who view such scenes with the Christian's eye, remember that God will display his wrath against those that forget him; so we expect that some as yet unseen cloud will dim the delightful sunshine. So it comes to pass. Disease settles down in the midst, and with steady, conquering step, prostrates its victim, and with unrelenting resolution bears him or her into the grasp of death. Where is the laughter now? Where is the cloudless joy which brightened that home? The laughter is turned into mourning; the joy is exchanged for oppressive sorrow. And what consolation do ye possess? Did the loved one die rejoicing in the Saviour; or have you nothing to look back upon from your mournful platform, but folly, cheerfulness, and the pursuit of pleasure? Alas! ye built up your happiness on dust, and unto dust hath your foundation returned. God in the midst of your merry circle has reared his furnace, and into it has he cast you. Reflect and learn. Depend not for your happiness on anything beneath; but secure a certainty by reliance upon that rock which God has presented to you, and on which, if ye build, ye will be safe for time and for eternity.

"We've no abiding city here.

Then let us live as pilgrims do;

Let not this world our rest appear;

But let us haste from all below."

In the midst of a nation, too, God sometimes rears his furnace. He is the God of nations, and so claims national acknowledgment. A nation's greatness is the gift of God, for he guides in council and frustrates the enemies that oppose. No nation could stand, but through the preserving kindness of God; and though God is longsuffering, and bears with a nation's sinfulness, yet in great jeopardy is the godless nation. The page of history reveals the fact of overthrow and destruction following on godlessness and iniquity; so that when abominations are rife in the land, it is well for men to tremble, weep, and pray. The deluge of divine wrath may sweep across the land, as the deluge of waters flowed in destructive billows over the old world. If destruction be not the doom, but a gentler treatment, it may be that God designs us to be trodden down by our enemies, as Israel of old, and to groan beneath their tyranny: or it may be that God confounds our devices; and our counsels, which we fancied the products of wisdom, we may discover to be the very offspring of folly, and so decline instead of elevation may mark our age. God may raise in our midst faction and discontent, anarchy and confusion, effeminacy and indecision. The whole national fabric may rock to and fro; and why? Because as a nation we forgot our God, and would not regard his laws. To look

abroad in our favoured land, and see in its midst the blushless effrontery of sin, is enough to cause deep humiliation, earnest entreaty, and mighty endeavour; for surely we may well fear that our God will descend in his righteous judgment, and rear the terrible furnace in our midst. We may be smitten by the sword, the pestilence, or the famine. The widow and the fatherless may be wailing in our streets; the desolate homes of the bereaved may everywhere arrest our sad attention; the sunken cheek, the fleshless bone, the filming eye, may declare that the blighting and the mildew have passed through our fields.

What a dreadful contemplation! yet it may become a fearful reality, unless we continue as a nation to present our united services to our God. As a nation let us pay all due reverence to his word, perfuming the legislation with its precious principles; as a nation let us honour God's holy day, and watch that no unholy foot desecrate its sacred hours. Alas, alas! what answer could we give, were God now to come with his searching interrogation—Where are my sabbaths? Who can give a fair account of their golden moments? How, as a nation, can we give a reply to this solemn question? Yet beware! the longsuffering may weary; and the order may be issued—Raise the furnace; smite the nation; for they have forgotten me, their rightful King and ungrudging Benefactor.

Our third inquiry shall be, Why does God rear the furnace? We must answer this by viewing the furnace in connection with the wicked and the holy.

To the wicked, God's visitations are the proofs of his wrath and indignation. They are sent in anger, as the vengeance of God on those who have dishonoured him. He views their conduct, and beholds them abusing the many blessings he has shed upon them, disregarding those impressive warnings which he has engraven on the page of revelation, and persecuting those people whom he has chosen for himself. We must be careful that, while unconverted, and unreconciled to God through Christ, we do not apply to ourselves those passages of God's word which explain the purpose of God in sending afflictions upon his own people: as, for instance, "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Sodom and Gomorrah were not visited for their reformation, but for their punishment: the Egyptian host was destroyed because God was wroth with them for the treatment of his people. The judgments of God with the wicked, harden, and cause murmuring. They blaspheme, they curse God, when they find adversity coming upon them. The same sun which melts the ice, hardens the clay; so the same trial which leads the godly to tears of penitence and cries of supplication, only makes the wicked more

obstinate in his iniquity and more desperate in his antagonism to God. Deceive not yourselves, ye slaves of sin. Because your cup is bitter, conclude not it is medicine to re-establish health, for it is to you destructive poison, and only gives in time a foretaste of the terrible wrath which awaits you hereafter. Meditate on the twenty-fourth chapter of the prophet Jeremiah, and there see what God would teach through the type of the good and bad figs. All were sent into captivity; yet the good figs, which represent God's people, were sent "for their good." "I will bring them again to this land: I will build them up and not pull them down: I will plant them, and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Different indeed was the intention of God in the scattering the evil figs, which represent the wicked; for God inflicts evil on them, and the result to them will be that destruction shall fall upon them from the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and that they shall be "a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them." O ponder well these things, then, ye godless, who are steeped deep in misfortune. What consolation can ye have? If ye dare to arrogate to yourselves the comforting words

which are the solace of the children of God, ye are falsely crying peace, when there is no peace; ye are the dupes of Satan; ye are the slaves of terrible delusion.

To the children of God (and glory be unto God for the blessed assurance), these sorrows, these trials, are parental chastisements. Love is apparent in all, though we feel little able to realize it. The page of Scripture reveals this truth, and we therefore have a weighty reason to accept it. The apostle Paul impresses the advantages and privileges of afflictive discipline in the following passage:—"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Who can desire a more persuasive exhortation to lead us to full resignation? These words sound as

the sweetest syllables of sympathizing friendship; they are words of wisdom and words of power; they remove clouds and darkness, and exhibit hope and promise; they assure the mind that God regards us with especial interest, and has a great work to achieve in his covenant connection with us. We see by faith the removal of deformity and the substitution of beauty; the gloomy night we find illumined by the light of consolation. Like Stephen in the scene of his martyrdom, we are allowed to recognize the encouraging presence of our God and Saviour. Oh how sweet are these reflections! how consoling such assurances! In all calamity may I be enabled to bear the heaviest burden, remembering that the hand that imposes the weight upholds the frame that bears it—that it is mercy, mercy, mercy, on every side.

Let us now, reader, consider some of the blessed purposes for which afflictions are sent.

It is most useful for the discovery of character; and what can be more desirable than to know yourself? What a painful ignorance is self-ignorance! What danger attends it! Affliction, however, evidences the true metal, and shows where pure godliness lies. It dips deep into the inner man, and brings into light the precious ore. We are able thus to recognize the work of God progressing: we discover the life of

faith in beautiful exhibition, and no longer lying in concealment. While prosperity surrounds men, all may exhibit a degree of placidity and coolness; but when the terrible tempest of desolation roars across our path, comparatively few, in the spirit of resignation, bend before the blast. The raging wind sweeps over the beautiful garden, breaking and rooting up the odorous flowers; but the flowers, bended and broken, load the very wind that prostrated them with their delightful perfumes. The sunflower turns to the god of day at evening, as he sinks behind the mountain leaving darkness around, the same look that it turned when, in all his brilliant glory, he shed his morning beams. So the child of God, visited by the severe stroke of affliction, must show the reality of his character by recognizing his God as full of all mercy and consideration, even in the midst of heavy calamity. If Christians, we must have Christian characteristics which are called into exercise at trying moments. Our courage and faithfulness must be tested and exhibited; and what a hero is that man who can stand amidst the dead so dear—amidst calumnies believed by friends, though false—amidst possessions alienated, domestic happiness blighted, prospects ruined, kind actions misinterpreted—and in un murmuring self-denial and unshaken confidence say, “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away;

blessed be the name of the Lord!" Here there is glory to God; the honour due unto his name is given; the reality of religion is displayed; the excellency of the power of godliness is recommended. Test yourselves, ye afflicted ones, and know whose ye are. Discover your relationship with God or your alienation from him. Gratefully accept affliction, as enabling you to try your state, your faith, your love, your confidence. The light of the furnace shows what is around it and within it; it invades each secret corner, and shows what may have long lain concealed. So the affliction illuminates and reveals what might have been but indistinct before, affording knowledge truly valuable and information highly encouraging. Do not murmur, then, if the furnace blazes around you, for by it you are enabled to discover what is dangerous on the one hand in your character, and what is consoling on the other.

The furnace is useful also for purification. We cast the metal in that it may lose its dross, and come forth cleansed and excellent. By this method its value and its usefulness are increased. And so afflictions act on men.

The trial attracts the mind to man's real state. The prodigal pressed on in his evil course till he came to be in want. While plenty smiled, while pleasure fascinated, while merriment and indulgence

reigned, no single thought guides him to contemplate himself; but as his portion melts away, as his gay flatterers depart, and he realizes his friendless plight, then powerfully rushes upon his mind a conviction of his folly, and his thoughts revert to home, with all its comforts and supplies. The father's love, the father's liberality, now act effectively upon him; and in the midst of his starvation and squalidity he resolves. Reflection, neglected before, now sways; and contrast between the condition of his father's menials and his own present helpless state confirms the conclusion. He at once separates himself from his former evil ways, and hastens home.

So affliction should act with us. It should be as a trumpet to arouse us from our idleness and indulgence. It should incite us to take our stand by God, and so confide in that which cannot disappoint. It is to make us anxious and considerate. The ties which bound us to the world are broken, that we may be purified from worldly contact, which defiles. The objects we chiefly valued are removed because we were contaminated by overmuch love to man, which stood in successful rivalry to the love of God. The riches which we possessed rust and perish, because we gave to them the heart more than unto God. Whatever may be the object or influence which stands between God and one of his own people

must be destroyed, and God's child purified from the defilement. By affliction, which we deeply feel, God does this; but the dark cloud is fringed with silvery light. The discipline is severe, but it is preparatory for glory. God is smiting off the fetters, to set us free; God is removing the oppressive burden, that we may the better ascend; God is cleansing the metal, that it may be of brighter lustre. We were as the chained eagle, fettered to the rock; but now we are as the eagle liberated from its chains, and free to soar above. We were as the heavily laden labourer, groaning under the accumulating weight of earthly occupations and possessions; but now we feel the pressing burden removed, and we can now look up whereas before we were bowed down and could only see the things beneath. We were defiled with the daubings of this world, but have passed through the deep waters of affliction and thereby been greatly cleansed. It is no light matter to be cast into the furnace, whether we view it in itself or in its results; nor does God intend that we should esteem it as of little moment. We must observe the affliction and feel the affliction, else it will do nothing for our souls. While the trial in one way depresses, in another it exalts; for while it makes us "lie among the pots," yet it makes us "as a dove whose wings are covered with silver, and her feathers

with yellow gold." O that we may find our afflictions so affect us, and that we may be drawn by them away from earth to set our "affections on things above"; that we may "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil"! May we find that all things opposed to true Christian character are destroyed, and that we evidence the fair lineaments of Christianity!

Have we sullied the Christian name with idleness in God's service? Then may we arise to energy and activity. Have traces of negligence marked our conduct? Then may we set ourselves with increased zeal to the precious work. Have our minds been darkened by ignorance of self? Then may we in affliction discover our own littleness and helplessness. Have we displayed our degeneracy by a selfish spirit? Then let us learn, from our suffering in affliction and our desire for sympathy amidst our trials, to feel for others, and to communicate to them that relief which they require. Let us show that we are desirous of fulfilling all Christian duty, so that, while we would "rejoice with those that rejoice," we are willing also "to weep with those that weep." O that we might constantly imitate our great example, Christ, and show deep interest in those that sorrow! O that we might catch somewhat of his spirit of compassion, and seek to dry the mourner's tear and

ease the troubled heart! The widowed mother follows the bier of the only child, but finds in her mourning journey the consolation so much needed, for the sorrower's Friend speaks the syllables of comfort, "Weep not." The sisters mourn for the departed brother, and find their Lord is not callous to their trouble; for the simple narrative assures us, "Jesus wept." Let then the furnace do its appointed work—let it remove from us what defiles and deforms the Christian character; and seek that it may remove, by its cleansing flame, the evils which cloud the beauty of holiness.

The furnace is useful for arousing recollections of the past. Nothing is forgotten by God, but on the tablets of his memory all things are inscribed. *We* forget, and thereby fancy that the record of our deeds is lost. Scenes of sin have been obliterated from our recollection, and, as far as our present knowledge is concerned, are as if they had never been enacted. Repentance for sin, however, God requires; and to awaken us to the necessity of this act is one great purpose of God in his dealings with men. In the time of trial does God achieve this object. He portrays on the canvas of memory the incidents of sin, over which the afflicted one must weep, and brings into close alliance those incidents and the pressing visitation. We have a striking instance of this in the case

of Joseph's brethren. Famine settled on their homes. They require sustenance; they seek for it in Egypt. Strange circumstances surround them, and they are placed in apparent danger. When they see and feel their perilous position, conscience summons before them their deed of heartless cruelty. The scene of persecution towards their brother Joseph immediately is contemplated, in all its dark colouring, and they bring into intimate conjunction that act of guilt and their present danger—"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

In the hour of our affliction let reflection do its work, and carry us back through the chequered scenes of life. We must not be afraid at such a moment to realize all our guilt, and in deep penitence to confess our transgressions before our God, in order that we may enjoy the full pardon secured for us by Christ. Dread not to revisit the hideous scenes. Into the darkest dens of your former iniquity descend, that ye may see the evils of which ye have been guilty, and discover what terrible results have followed. Pass not over any act which your memories recall, nor attempt to extenuate your faults. Acknowledge the greatness of your errors, and, while recognizing their extent, rely on the full satisfaction made by Christ.

The words of comfort will fall sweetly on the ear—"The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." Oh, how delightful, if the furnace unshrouds these dark doings of the past, and leads us to confession and tears! Oh, how delightful, if its flame reveals the full consolation to be derived from a view of Christ, and the complete efficacy of his blood! Oh, how delightful, if it should display to us the utter worthlessness of all upon which we falsely built, and so send us to seek a firmer foundation! Oh, how profitable, if it should lead us to realize the true answer to the searching interrogation—"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed"? namely, "The end of those things is death."

The furnace is useful for the exercise of our graces. Affliction is advantageous in keeping up energy in these: it supplies them with opportunity for full development. While then it pains, it likewise benefits. The rough rubbing polishes the metal—the handling of the gold keeps its lustre bright: so the dealing of God with man invigorates and brightens his graces. Thereby our faith is tried. Can we confide in God while all seems threatening? Does the severity of the blow not rob us of our tranquillity and lead us to seek another God? nay, our trial is sent to prove our faith. The father is to slay his son: does Abraham object?

Noah is commanded to rear the ark : does Noah doubt ? Job is deprived of all he had : does Job completely fail in his reliance upon God ? What do we ? Does trial rob us of our confidence, or can we say, " Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him " ? Hereby your love is tried. Do ye still love God, though God smites ? Can ye acknowledge his doings to be the proceeds of mercy ? To God be given the heart ; and to whatsoever discipline he may subject us, still we must love. The tree sheds on the axe that lays it low its sweet perfume. The vase that contained the roses may be broken ; but still each portion retains the perfume, and still emits sweet odour. The ointment gives out the richer smell when the jar that contained it is shattered. So the true excellency of love appears, if we continue to love when we are recipients of chastisement from Him we love. Nothing easier, than to bear affection to those who only give us what we selfishly desire ; but sincerity in love appears when we love the hand that strikes the blow, feeling assured that true affection and sense of duty direct the stroke. Love is the brilliant grace which shines conspicuous in the Christian character, and whatsoever renders it especially apparent should be highly valued. " The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. " With anxious eye the father David watched the sickening

child, and earnest was the parent's supplication. The child, however, so loved and cherished, died. Did David murmur? no; he loved the child, but he loved God more; and in composed resignation kissed the rod. He felt now the hand of God heavy indeed; yet he reflected and thus expressed himself—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He arose from the earth, where he had lain in humiliation and prayer before God for the child, and now washed and anointed himself, changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped. To his Father and God the bereaved parent resorts, assured that there alone is consolation to be found. His love is still overflowing towards his heavenly Benefactor, and he feels "all is well." O that our love may so influence us when God strikes! O that affliction may thus bring out the power of our love to God, and that we may show that love in an unmurmuring resignation to his will!

That very hand that strikes the blow,
Was smitten once for me.

J. McCONNEL HUSSEY.

XXVI.

It is the Christian's peculiar privilege to derive consolation from tribulation—like the bee, to extract

honey from a poisonous plant; or, like the indefatigable miner, to fathom the mire and clay, until he arrives at the rich vein of silver. It is commonly said of those who have rapidly increased in riches, that everything they have touched seems to have turned to gold. The Christian, in spiritual matters, possesses this transforming power in an eminent degree. What to the mass of mankind would be a source of anxiety, difficult to be sustained, by the efficacy of divine grace powerfully operating in his bosom, he converts into a cause of rejoicing. If he is required to place the cup of tribulation to his lips, he is possessed of the secret charm which can render the bitter waters of Marah sweet to the palate and refreshing to the soul.

H. S. PLUMPTRE.

XXVII.

BEHOLD the most natural effect of afflictions! They facilitate all the duties of religion—hatred of the world, in rendering it more disagreeable to us; indifference toward all creatures, by giving us experience either of their perfidy by infidelities, or of their frailty by unexpected losses; privation of pleasures, by placing obstacles in their way; the desire of eternal riches, and consoling returns toward God, by leaving us

almost no consolation among men ; lastly, all the obligations of faith become more easy to the afflicted soul, his good desires find fewer obstacles; his weakness fewer rocks, his faith more aids, his lukewarmness more resources, his passions more checks, and even his virtues more meritorious opportunities.

Thus the Church was never more fervent and purer than when she was afflicted ; the ages of her sufferings and persecutions were the ages of her splendour and of her zeal. Tranquillity afterwards corrupted her manners : her days became less pure and less innocent as soon as they became more fortunate and powerful ; her glory ended almost with her misfortunes ; and her peace, as the prophet said, was more bitter, through the licentiousness of her children, than even her troubles had ever been through the barbarity of her enemies.

MASSILLON.

XXVIII.

Am I a follower of Christ ? If so, am I to expect to pass through life without trial ? Can I desire it ? Oh, surely no ; for I remember, that if I suffer with Christ here, I shall reign with him hereafter. However severe, then, the affliction may be, I have a glorious prospect before me. But surely I desire not

to shrink from following Christ fully? No: Jesus, I am thine, and therefore will not fall back from encountering all thou dost design for me. There may be sorrow for the night, but joy cometh in the morning; and where thou art there is truly morning, for thou art the dayspring from on high. Who would not be willing to undergo the gloom of the night, to see the glorious contrast of the breaking morning? The hills around us cast deep shadows over us, and if we narrowed our views to these limits we should enjoy no happiness, no contentment; but we watch the mountain tops, and see there is sunlight beyond. If we build up our temple of pleasure on such a foundation as earth and time, which circumscribe our vision as the shadowing hills, we shall be constantly incurring returning gloom: we shall find these hills studded with the graves of disappointed hopes and unfulfilled expectations. Beyond, then, you must look for true tranquillity—namely, to the revelation of God's will with regard to those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," when the present shall have passed away.

J. McCONNEL HUSSEY.

XXIX.

O THOU who dry'st the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when distressed and wounded here,
We could not fly to thee.

But thou wilt heal the broken heart—
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathe sweetness out of woe.

MOORE.

XXX.

REMEMBER, that as to cast a doubt upon the reality of the *threatenings* was the artifice of Satan before the fall; so, to make us question the reality of the *promises* has been his policy ever since. He knows that a man may think too *much* of his sins as well as too little; seeing that he is at the same perilous distance from salvation when he puts himself beyond the reach of forgiveness, as when, in the spiritual pride of his heart, he disdains to ask that forgiveness may be granted. Hence the suggestion of the enemy to the distressed sinner is, that, instead of labouring to fan into life and flame the spark of hope which remains

in him, it were better that he should make short work of it by settling down in irrevocable hopelessness, by standing at sullen distance from God, and by denying all place of repentance, though sought carefully with tears. Of all such suggestions, ye may learn the source by seeing whither they tend. For they go to shorten the arms of Omnipotence, to make the uttermost of Christ a measurable thing—to put a price, finite, determinate, and computable, on the blood which cleanseth from all sin.

Away, then, with these dark thoughts, fresh wafted from a world which hath neither hope nor light! Wrestle mightily with this 'evil spirit of despair. Roll yourselves upon the covenant promises of God in Christ. Challenge the plighted honour of God to save even to the uttermost penitent and believing souls. When David was once in a great strait, called upon to choose between sore judgments, his prompt faith decided in a moment that the Lord's judgments would be the mildest judgments: "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord." Observe ye a like wise and holy policy. When despair offers to you its coldest relief, reason thus with yourselves: whether there be a *better* alternative or not, a *worse* there cannot be. Fall I may, and to fall I deserve; but I will fall into the hands of the Lord. If I see Heaven's avenging arm lifted up, I will say, Strike, but save! If pursu-

ing justice follows me even to the cross of Christ, I will say, At least, let me perish *here*. Whilst, if men marvel at my faith, and angels would know the ground of my confidence, and hell should ask a reason for my hope that I should be delivered from its merited but accursed thrall, my answer to them all shall be this—"Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." Amen.

D. MOORE.

XXXI.

THEN it must be miraculous ; for nothing short of a supernatural work could produce such an effect. Sunrise at eventide is contrary to nature ; and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness is a work of grace. Pause, then, my soul, over the promise, and see whether such an event hath taken place in thy circumstances.

As everything in Jesus and his salvation, in respect to his Church and people, is the sole result of grace, not nature, so all the Lord's dispensations carry with them the same evidences. It is eventime in the soul, yes, midnight darkness, ere the Lord shines upon it ; it is so in all the after dispensations, when some more than ordinary manifestation is made ; it is among the blessed methods of grace, when the Lord surprises his

people with some rich visits of his love and mercy. "I said," cried the Church, when the waters of the sanctuary ran low, "my way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God." But it is in creative weakness that creator strength is manifested; and when we are most weak in ourselves, then is the time to be strong in the Lord. We have a lovely example of this in the case of the patriarch Jacob. His beloved Joseph was torn in pieces, as the poor patriarch thought, by wild beasts: a famine compelled him to send his sons into Egypt to buy corn, and there Simeon, another son, was detained; and the governor of Egypt declared, that until Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, was sent, Simeon should not return. Under these discouraging circumstances the poor father cried out, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and will you take Benjamin also? All these things are against me." But the sequel proved that all these things were *for him*, and all working out a deliverance for him and his household, in which the Church of Jesus (which was to be formed from the house of Jacob) should triumph for ever. "At evening time it shall be light." The Lord sometimes, and perhaps not unfrequently, induces darkness, that his light may be more striking. He hedges up his people's way with thorns, that the almighty hand which removes them may be more plainly seen. Oh,

it is blessed to be brought low, to be surrounded sometimes with difficulties, to see no way of escape, and all human resources fail, purposely that our extremity may be the Lord's opportunity, and when we are most low, Jesus may be most exalted. My soul, is it now eventide in thy soul, as it is eventide in the day? Art thou stripped, humbled, convinced of thy nothingness? O look to all-precious, all-suitable Jesus! Hear what the Lord saith: "When the poor and the needy seek for water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midst of valleys." "At evening time it shall be light."

DR. HAWKER.

XXXII.

ARE ye murmuring against God, because ye are subjected to severe trial? Do you fancy that ye have not deserved it? If so, why not? Do you remember that God's great purpose in your creation was his own glory, and have you sought to advance that glory? Readers, we are apt to forget our God and our own duty to him. But have we reason to complain when we contemplate ourselves, and contrast our case with

that of others? Look within, and do you recognize what deserves impunity? Is your heart right with God? Is your mind engaged in seeking to possess a knowledge of God? Have ye sought to enthrone Jesus in your will, and to illustrate his precepts in your life? Is Christ still standing at the door and knocking; or have ye opened, and allowed him to enter? Reflect and examine, and see if ye are not rebels against God, and so justly subjected to his righteous indignation. We must take care, if we are disposed to murmur at the dealings of God, that we are able to prove ourselves undeserving of God's severities; and who can do this? O let us rather see our evil, kiss the rod, and learn the lesson thus distinctly taught, than raise a voice of complaint against the justice and mercy of our God. But, look around and tell me if your case is so severe. Are you not still among the living? How many have you seen carried to their long home! Have you health? How many have you seen smitten by disease and pining in sickness! How many have ye beheld racked with pain, while ye have been spared such suffering! Can you hear sweet sounds such as the melody of nature, the words of friendship, the syllables of wise counsel, the messages of love and consolation? and have you not seen many deaf to every sound, unable to hear the voice of those they love; and do ye

complain! Can ye behold the beauties of creation? Have ye delight in gazing on the outstretched landscape, and watching the grandeur of nature—the valley, the hill, the stream, the ocean, the lofty tree, the lowly flower, the bounding torrent, the placid lake? Have ye the enjoyment of recognizing the countenance of a loved companion, whose smile awakens pleasure, while his frown darkens us with sorrow? And have ye not met with many who walk in constant night, being deprived of the blessing of sight! And do ye complain, and not bend to the divine will, though it may decree affliction as your lot? Do ye find that your garner is not stored with the luxuries of earth, though it is well supplied with all the necessities of life; and do ye murmur because ye revel not in noble feasts and costly viands? Look around, and see the squalid and the starving. Go, enter the homes of the impoverished—behold the mother's sunken cheek, the father's dejected look; hear the famished children crying for bread, and finding all their entreaties vain: and then regard your condition; can you complain? Have you to follow a loved child to the grave? Is the separation severe? Yes, it must be; but is your trial greater than any other? You lose one; but look round and see the desolation which has swept across other homes. Many were the cheerful faces that smiled around the table; but one

by one they were summoned hence, and the dwelling once so cheerful with its inmates, is denuded. All are gone. The parents sit, and mourning contemplate the vacant seats: death has executed the terrible decree. How comparatively light is your affliction! why then complain? O God, teach me to submit; for how many favours have I enjoyed which have been denied to others! My pathway has been bright indeed when contrasted with that of others; and why have I been spared the trials? Surely it is thy goodness, not my deserts: thy longsuffering mercy, and not my power to avert the evil. I will not murmur, for thou O God of love reignest supreme, and events fall out according to thy almighty will.

He that formed me in the womb,
He shall guide me to the tomb.
All my time shall ever be
Ordered by his wise decree.

Times of sickness, times of health,
Times of penury and wealth,
Times of trial and of grief,
Times of triumph and relief,

Times the tempter's power to prove,
Times to taste a Saviour's love;
All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend.

J. McCONNEL HUSSEY.

XXXIII.

WHAT though the child of God lie for a night in the darkness of sorrow and weeping for his sins? Mark awhile, and the day will dawn, and a daystar will arise in his heart, that will never set until it hath conducted him unto the light that no man can else attain unto: the Sun of Righteousness will presently appear and will dry away his tears, and with everlasting light will shine upon him for evermore.

R. BOLTON.

XXXIV.

OBSERVE, first, the feeling to be cherished. It is trust, confidence, a repose in something out of ourselves. Trust is what philosophers call one of our prospective emotions, and supposes the highest form of certainty in the object trusted of which anything yet future will admit. It is hope waiting, faith realizing, love scorning to be bound by the fetters of human likelihood. To trust God, supposes we cannot trace him, cannot see him. Like Paul, we must submit to be held by the hand; like Bartimeus, we must trust to the hearing of the ear. We have no light, we must look to those that have; and to whom should we look but to Him that saith, "I am the light of the world"?

Trust, then—that is, a right trust, a child's trust, a Christian's trust: never stipulate for pledges. With an earnest or without one—with the eye of Heaven beaming *brightly*, or with its face all hung with blackness—its language is all one: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

But mark, further, what is the object of this large and unquestioning confidence. We are venturing upon it our immortality, and should be well assured that it will bear the weight. Well, then, "let him trust in the *name of the Lord*," adds the prophet: as if he had said, "You have been trusting in your privileges, your comforts, your inward sense of acceptance with God; but their poor glory has departed. They were a *feeble* tower, at best, and they yielded at the first assault of the enemy. But the name of the Lord is a *strong* tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe"—safe from enemies, safe from fears, safe from the depressing influences of this groaning tabernacle, safe from the fiery darts of despair.

Now, you can hardly overrate the importance of this act of simple affiance on the revealed *name* of God. The secret of its acceptableness is, that it fetches from God himself all motives to forgive, all arguments to pity, all its strong reasons why the spirits should not fail before him, nor the souls which he hath made. On the treasures laid up in this great name, especially

as proclaimed to the man of God upon the mount, we may not dwell. Suffice it that they meet every want, and lighten every burden, of the human spirit. Are you miserable? the Lord is *merciful*. Are you needy? the Lord is *gracious*. Have you many a time struggled with your best convictions? the Lord is *longsuffering*. Nay, have your sins been as many as they are great; as varied as they are dark; not only hateful in themselves, but, by reason of light, and knowledge, and abused opportunity, made more hateful still? the Lord's pardons have no limits: he *forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin*.

And then, lastly, observe, the prophet adds—"Let him stay upon his God." He hath made his choice, let him abide by it. He hath reached the altar, let him cleave to it. There he must rest; there he must wait; and if it be a sin to trust God too much, there he must perish too. But tell us, O ye angels of light! saw ye ever such a sight as this—a soul trusting, and yet sinking; cleaving to the rock, and yet betrayed by it—throwing itself in bold venture into the hands of God, and yet allowed to slip through into the bitter pains of eternal death? Oh, no; it is recited in heaven, it is murmured in hell, it is heard in the darkness, it is read in the light—"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Want comfort he may; want light he may: but never shall he fail

of salvation, if only he trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God. Amen.

D. MOORE.

XXXV.

THE sufferings of the saints are the sum of Christian philosophy: they are said to wean us from the vanities and affections of this world, and to create in us strong desires of heaven; while God causes us to be here treated rudely that we may long to be in our country, where God shall be our portion, and angels our companions, and Christ our perpetual feast, and never-ceasing joy shall be our condition and entertainment. "O death, how bitter art thou to man that is at ease and rest in his possessions!" But he that is uneasy in his body and unquiet in his possessions, vexed in his person, discomposed in his designs, who finds no pleasure, no rest here, will be glad to fix his heart where only he shall have what he can desire, and what can make him happy. As long as the waters of persecutions are upon the earth, so long we dwell in the ark; but where the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to a wandering course of life, and never to return to the house of her safety.

Bp. JEREMY TAYLOR.

XXXVI.

THE consolations of God, emphatically so called, supersede for the most part the necessity of outward bodily comforts; they make the possessor happy in the absence of all earthly gratifications. That peace which the Spirit of God alone can whisper to the soul, will hush into a heavenly calm even the most terrific storm; for thou, O God, shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.

H. S. PLUMPTRE.

XXXVII.

“WHATSOEVER is brought upon thee, take cheerfully; and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.”

Blessed Jesus, since thy kingdom is not of this world, let not me, thy devoted servant and subject, either desire or hope to be happy upon earth; but grant me to love what thou commandest, and desire what thou dost promise, that among the sundry and manifold changes of the world my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.

SHERLOCK.

XXXVIII.

AFFLICTION is a winter time; and yet there is much that is useful in winter. We do not luxuriate in it as in the warm and sunny days of summer, yet it would not be beneficial for us were summer always here. The constant sunshine and warmth of summer might enervate the body, and we might become inactive and disposed to idleness. The injurious effects of such continued experience of what is agreeable would be great; and so God has seen right to vary the seasons. We should little realize the full delight of summer, if we had no winter. The contrast should awaken gratitude, when a summer time is ours. If we had all prosperity and no adversity, we should never learn the wholesome instructions which adversity conveys. The winter frost kills the weeds, and the worms which destroy the herbage; and so afflictions root out those feelings and affections which God desires to destroy. Is it winter time with you? See that you allow it to do its proper work. Feel the cold, and seek the Spirit's fire to warm; feel that it is a season to gather round you friends, and select those whose "conversation is in heaven"—who will console, comfort, and encourage; feel that it is not long continued, but that quickly on its heels are pressing spring and summer; and with such prospects

bear patiently the present. Consider, that in the winter there is still the sun shining kindly upon us, and gratefully recognize the mercy; and so in the season of affliction feel that Jesus is present, regarding your suffering and ready to alleviate your sorrows.

J. McCONNEL HUSSEY.

XXXIX.

THIS, O Lord, is the portion of thy people; and I know, O Lord, and do verily believe, it is of thy goodness thou hast caused me to be troubled. But far, very far, are my sufferings from those of thy blessed apostle, professing of himself—"In labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often; in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness." Such a heap of troubles betiding an

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innocent, active, blessed man, may surely move me to bear patiently my smaller proportion of affliction, remembering that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

SHERLOCK.

XL.

BOTH this, and the greatest of the pains my corruptible flesh can suffer, are but as flea-biting to the least of the pains of the nether hell which my sins have justly deserved; but, blessed Lord, let me have my punishment in this life, and spare, O spare me, in the life to come!

I am not master of myself except in patience I possess my soul, in spite of what flesh can do unto me.

"A furious man cannot be justified, or escape punishment; for the sway of his fury shall be his destruction."

"A patient man will bear for a time; and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. He will hide his words for a time, and the lips of many shall declare his wisdom."

I know, O Lord! that thou dost not willingly afflict the sons of men. St. Paul had "his thorn in the flesh," but it was to prevent the swelling of his

heart with spiritual pride and vainglory; and I humbly beg, O Lord, that my present pain in body may, through my patient sufferance, conduce to the better health of my soul. And O that I were as feelingly sensible of the many sores and diseases of my soul, as I am now of my bodily pains! I should then more affectionately and with greater devotion apply myself to the great Physician both of soul and body.

SHERLOCK.

XLI.

“WHEN I am in heaviness, I will think upon God; when my heart is vexed I will complain, even unto God will I make my moan.”

“Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul! and why art thou so disquieted within me? Put thy trust in God; for I will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.”

“Put thy trust in God, and be doing good” [whilst I do the thing that is good, and abstain from evil, I may reasonably hope (upon my devout prayers) for the return of God’s favour unto me, and that the light of his countenance shall dispel all my darksome imaginations, all my gloomy fears and the perturbations of my spirit.]

Return, return, O Lord God of Hosts, and cause thy face to shine upon thy servant! O show the light of thy countenance, and I shall be whole!

SHERLOCK.

XLII.

AT length, though consciousness fails not, you are powerless to give expression to it. The sight dims, the hearing fails, the tongue refuses its office; you are left in the solemn stillness of the valley of the shadow of death; your spirit, hovering between the two worlds, prepares for its entrance upon that eternal state of which you have thought so much and so often, on the brink of which you now find yourself, and of which soon you will know all the wonders. With what awe do you walk in the seclusion, and gloom, and silence, of that dark and solitary region! True, for others the light of day may be shining in full splendour, but your eye is closed to its cheering ray. The voice of love and affection may speak sweet words of soothing to you; but, though never before was affection so deep, never before was love so strong, your ear catches no sound, your eye makes no recognition. All those who would fain thus minister to you in life's last hour, you are about to leave for ever here. Yet you cannot

sorrow for them. You have already, in faith, committed them to the care of One whose care for their best interests is only equalled by his love and his power, and *they* are *infinite*. Neither can you sorrow for yourself. This loneliness, awful though it be, is but for a moment: you will change the sympathy of earthly friends for the love of your God, and the ministry of his angels, and the society of the blessed. God will not fail his word: he will be with you on your way. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or, can faith be so weak as not to trust him in this, the last great trial of the soul? He who hath sustained thee in the temptations of life, shall he not be thy rod and thy staff in the trials of death? Or, is his hand shortened that he cannot save his Israel now? Rather shall ample evidence of his presence be yours, in a holy calm, which none but he can give; in a firm, unshaken faith, which his Spirit alone can supply; and in a hope so holy and so bright, that, as it emanates from heaven, so will it be an earnest of that heaven for you. Who knoweth, but that when thy soul, thus plumed for flight, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, free to expatiate on the expanse before it, spreads its wings for flight, angels may be at hand, ministering to thee as to the patient Lazarus, sustaining thee in thy flight,

and bearing thee in safety and in peace to thy rest in heaven?

J. JAMES.

XLIII.

WE faint in the day of adversity, because we look to ourselves, not to God; we regard rather the hand which smites, than that which heals the wound. We look rather to the momentary effect which it produces, than the cause from whence it proceeds; forgetting that the Father's face is manifested as clearly while wielding the rod, as saluting with a kiss. Some wounds require the healing emollient ointment, while others must be touched with the caustic: the skilful surgeon will employ both, yet equally be our friend. Let us confide implicitly in our heavenly Physician: he best knows the nature of our disorder; he alone can administer the efficacious remedy.

Let the servants of God learn more and more to rejoice in God. There is a wide difference between confidence in God, and joying in God; but this we must say, that, the greater our faith, the greater our joy. Although, in consequence of the weakness of our faith, there may be but little sensible joy, still there can be no joy without great faith. Let the world see that the consolation of God is something

more than a mere name—that it is capable of supporting the soul under the vicissitudes of life—that those who profess to be acting under its influence may not be exposed to the malicious sneers of the ungodly, who will say, These are the men who took the Lord for their God; they now faint and are weary in their minds. The inconsistent conduct of believers, their fretful tempers, their impatience under trials, do more harm to the cause of religion than the open attacks of professed enemies; they call up the sarcasms of the scorner and infidel, who argue from thence that religion is what they would wish to make it, a fable of cunning device, having no existence in reality, or at best a thing of melancholy. Let it appear, then, in all your transactions, that your consolations are of heavenly origin—that they spring from a deeply rooted principle, the love of God shed abroad in the heart—that you are enabled, in some measure at least, to act up to the apostolic injunction to “rejoice in the Lord always.”

H. S. PLUMPTRE.

XLIV.


SLEEP is the Christian name for death; it is the beautiful and prophetic colour that Christ spreads over the features of the dead; and is designed to teach us,

that as sure as a morning comes to the sleeper on his couch, so sure an everlasting morning shall break upon the tenants of the tomb.

DR. CUMMING.

XLV.

“SORROW not as those that have no hope.” Did thy friend die rejoicing in the believer’s refuge, Jesus Christ? If so, what joy does the departed one now experience! Liberated from pain of body and mental care, the spirit has left the prison-house of the earthly tabernacle to enter into the gorgeous palaces of heaven. The spirit is free now: it is disencumbered of the oppressive weight of flesh and blood. While here, the poor believer struggled in the great conflict against sin, the world, and the devil; but now he has reached his wished-for home, and, rejoicing in the victory of Christ, he is recognized as a faithful soldier, who is to share in his general’s triumph. The wreath is woven, and the pierced hand of Jesus will place it on the veteran’s brow, and loud acclamations from the assembled throng of angels will celebrate the great event. The wretched robe of earth, with all its imperfections, is cast aside, and the garments of heaven are cast around the ascended saint. Oh, would you call him back? would you seek to restore him to all the troubles



and uncertainties of life? Cruel were it, to entertain a wish to take the happy spirit from the midst of smiles, and place him again in the valley of weeping—it were excessive selfishness. His friend Jesus Christ has arranged for his happiness, and therefore hath bidden him hasten home.

Thou art gone to the grave—but we will not deplore thee,
Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb;
The Saviour has passed through its portals before thee,
And the lamp of his love was thy guide through the gloom.

Thou art gone to the grave—we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough path of the world by thy side;
But the wide arms of mercy are spread to enfold thee,
And sinners may hope, since the Saviour hath died.

Thou art gone to the grave—and, its mansion forsaking,
Perhaps thy tried spirit in doubt lingered long;
But the sunshine of heaven beamed bright on thy waking,
And the sound which thou heard'st was the seraphim's song.

Thou art gone to the grave—but 'twere wrong to deplore thee,
Since God was thy ransom, thy guardian, thy guide;
He gave thee, he took thee, he soon will restore thee,
Where death has no sting, since the Saviour has died.

Bp. Heber.

J. McCONNEL HUSSEY.

XLVI.

DEAR SIR,—I thought it would not be convenient to speak to you at Harborough, or to wait at Bowden,

so soon after I came from Mount Sorrel; and therefore I take this way of assuring you that I sincerely condole with you upon that melancholy providence which you and your good family are now mourning under. Those transports of grief which you could not conceal when I saw you last, as well as the greatness of your loss and the known tenderness of your temper, persuade me that it is not at all unreasonable to give you a caution against that excess of sorrow which too frequently prevails in the best of men, when, like you, they are weeping over the dust of a dear relative and an amiable friend.

I know, Sir, that your own reason and good sense, and especially those religious principles which through the grace of God so apparently prevail in your mind, will furnish you with the noblest supports upon such an occasion, and therefore it is not needful that I should particularly remind you of their importance. I only desire that you would turn your thoughts that way, and, instead of fixing them upon the aggravating circumstances of your affliction, would lay your bosom open to those strong consolations which reason and grace are so ready to administer

Consider, my dear brother, that you have an interest in an almighty Friend—a friend whom you can never lose, but who will stand by you, and support you when all earthly comforts forsake you. And consider that


you are hastening to a glorious and happy world, where you will meet with this lamented brother again, and for ever converse with him upon terms of much greater advantage. When your heart is warmed with such reflections as these, you will see the highest reason to acquiesce in the divine determination, and to bless God for his compassion and goodness in providing such rich and reviving cordials for his mourning and afflicted children.

Instead of indulging immoderate sorrow, let us be careful to learn those useful instructions which such an awful providence is designed to teach. Let us learn not to amuse ourselves with the fond expectation of any certain happiness in this lower world, since God can so suddenly remove the dearest of our enjoyments, or even in a moment change our countenance and send us away; for in that day all such thoughts will immediately perish. Let us rather be forming great and generous designs for the glory of God and the good of the world around us; and then if Providence should see fit to remove us while we are young, our honest intentions shall be kindly remembered and bountifully rewarded, though we had not an opportunity of putting them in execution.

Give me leave, good sir, to recommend to you an experiment which I have often tried myself—namely, to read over 1 Cor. xv. 12–58. Consider as you go

along, that it is as certainly the word of God's truth as if it were pronounced by a voice from heaven, and apply this glorious promise of a glorious resurrection to your brother and yourself; and I believe it will have a happy tendency to compose your mind, and to awaken the more delightful passions of hope and joy. I was so impressed with it when I heard it read over your poor brother's grave, that really I could only weep that I was left behind. 2 Cor. v. 1-9, and 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, are also very proper to be consulted upon such an occasion, and in the same view.

DEAR CLIO,—I am heartily concerned to hear that you still remain inconsolable for the death of your father. Can you, my beloved friend, find no support in the thought of your interest in that everlasting parent who will never forsake his mourning children? Is it nothing that you will meet your father in heaven, and meet him there infinitely more amiable than ever he appeared upon earth? What are these few moments of absence, when you are secure of being for ever in his company; and when you know that a wise, faithful, and merciful God intended your mutual advantage by the painful separation which you so much lament? Surely, Clio, if we could but maintain uninterrupted communion with God, and steady and affectionate regards to the unseen and



eternal world, these light afflictions, that are but for a moment, would be supported with resignation and cheerfulness.

... When Mr. Clark was alive, you did not only take pleasure in him when he was in the same house and room with yourself, but, when at the distance of above a hundred miles, you rejoiced to think that he was well—that he was surrounded with agreeable companions and friends, furnished with plentiful accommodations, and, above all, that he laid himself out with vigour and success in the service of our great and common Master: and will you entertain so mean an idea of the preparations which the great God of heaven and of earth has made for the supreme happiness of his beloved children, as to question whether he does now enjoy more valuable friends, more delightful entertainments, and a sphere of more extensive service? I am confident, Madam, that you would have been thankful from your very heart for your brother's recovery. And would it have been a greater mercy to him to have been raised from a languishing illness to a state of confirmed health, amidst the vanity and misery of this state of mortality, than to be exalted to immortal health and vigour, the society of angels, and the enjoyment of God? Or has the most generous-spirited woman in the world for once imagined that she is to be thank-

ful on the account of none but herself? So far from that, you think it a great theme for gratitude, and no doubt are frequently praising God, that you have an excellent brother at St. Alban's, so agreeably settled, so universally respected, and so zealously and successfully engaged in a most honourable service. But is it not more, that you have another brother, among the blessed host of angels in heaven? and how different are the services the one is paying before the throne of grace, and the other before the throne of glory, when they are both engaged, it may be at the same moment, in the contemplation of God and of divine things! How vastly do you think the younger brother has now the advantage of the elder! May there not be the same difference in accuracy, solidity, and manly pleasure, between the thoughts of the blessed saints in heaven and the philosopher upon earth, as between the sublimest thoughts of that philosopher and the roving imagination of a little infant, in whom reason is just beginning to dawn? Certainly, Clio, it should be a constant source of delight to us, amidst all the disturbances and calamities of life, to think that we have so many friends in heaven, whose joy and glory should be to us even as our own.

MY DEAR FRIEND, You perceive the hand of God in this calamity—of that God whom you have

chosen for your hope and portion, and to whom you have committed yourself and all your concerns, and among the rest, that dear brother whom you now lament. Have you not often been saying, in relation to the event of this providence, while it was yet in suspense—Father, *thy will* be done? Repeat that tender and humble address, and argue yourself into such a silent acquiescence as may be consistent with it.

You are well satisfied of the sincere and exemplary piety of our dear departed friend (for so I fear I must now call him), and no doubt it has often recurred to your mind as a source of divine consolation. You cannot forbear but to remember the melancholy circumstances he was lately in, when languishing under a consuming distemper, and in a near prospect of approaching dissolution; and surely you can as little forbear to contrast this mournful view with that scene of triumphant pleasure which the gospel so sublimely and so beautifully describes, and to which you firmly believe he is now admitted. Surely, as you lately sympathized in his sorrows, you may now participate in his felicity; and when you reflect that God has wiped away all tears from his eyes, the briny drops may cease to flow from our own, or at least be converted into tears of transport. Let this thought, my friend, be a consolation to you, not only

under your present grief, but under all the future calamities of life—that you have a dear brother at the right hand of God, and surrounded by the joys of paradise, while you are wandering in a gloomy wilderness, subject to the infirmities and the temptations of humanity.

P. DODDRIDGE.

XLVII.

THERE is in this a type and foretaste of that which shall be at the grand resurrection of the pious dead; the delivery of this son to the mother is only a type and earnest of what shall be when every restored son shall be delivered to the rejoicing mother. And the joy that was felt in the home of Nain shall be only a dim, dim foretaste of that intenser joy that shall be felt in the heavenly home, when all lost relationships shall be restored, all suspended communion shall be resumed, and each shall know the other and reciprocate each other's joys, and sing, as they never sang before, that new song which is ever new and ever old, because it never wearies and can never be exhausted.

DR. CUMMING.

XLVIII.

ALL the torments and evils of this world are not to be estimated with the joys of the blessed: it is the gift of God, a donative beyond the military stipend; it is beyond our work and beyond our wages, and beyond the promise and beyond our thoughts, and above our understandings and above the highest heavens; it is a participation of the joys of God, and of the inheritance of the Judge himself.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

XLIX.

THE beauty of the just in the other life (saith ANSELM) shall be equal to the glory of the sun, though sevenfold brighter than now it is.

BOLTON.

L.

THE eternal city (saith AUSTEN) is incomparably bright and beautiful; where there is victory, verity, dignity, sanctity, life, eternity.

LI.

It will be a festival—a feast for the imagination, a feast for the intellect, a feast for the heart; all the faculties of man's soul will be feasted with things congenial to their nature. It will be the repose which all humanity, after its exile and its weary wanderings below, shall feel to be its home; and in which home-born joys, like swallows under a roof, shall nestle for ever.

DR. CUMMING.

LII.

GET thee gone then, O my soul, and fly hence to those celestial mansions where only thou shalt find rest! There shall thy desires be filled; there shall the presence of God replenish thee with unutterable delights; there only shalt thou hear the voice of joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. Divorce thy affections from sin and from all the pleasures of the world, though never so dear to thee, and marry them to Christ; thy gain shall be great, thy glory greater, even life and happiness for evermore. Why shouldst thou stay and abide any longer here, amongst the enemies of thy peace—amidst so many sorrows and afflictions pursuing thee

for thy sins? Who would not forego a cottage to gain a kingdom? Who would not exchange a few frail comforts of this life for those permanent joys of bliss? Why wilt thou any longer settle thine heart upon that which is nothing? What are the choicest delights here below, being rightly balanced, other than vanity and vexation of spirit? Cease then to admire any outward excellences, and be wholly taken with those resplendent beauties that are in the face of thy Saviour, to whom ere long thou shalt be married, and partake of that great feast with which he will entertain thee at that wedding-day. Cease, and care only for those durable riches that shall abide with thee when thou shalt be no more. Hasten and hunt after the honour and happiness of the saints; there is no preferment like being in heaven. Possess thyself of him who hath been thy God from thy youth—who hath many a time raised thee up with his comforts, when thou hast been in the valley of the shadow of death—who hath been the portion of thine inheritance, and hath maintained thy lot: forsake him not, and he will bring thee to honour at the last—to such honour as all the glory of this world cannot reach unto. He that hath made heaven for his own children, can only declare the joys of that place. Return, then, into thy rest, O my soul, from which thou hast long wandered! Be content to part with anything on earth, which

thou canst not keep, to gain everything in heaven, which thou canst never lose. Drown all thy delights in those sweet contemplations of heavenly bliss. Press hard to this mark; strive for this victory; fight for this crown; lay hold on eternal life; and let nothing in this world take away thy crown.

R. BOLTON.

LIII.

As the just man's path, so far as this life is concerned, draws towards a close, it is marvellous how knowledge will seem almost perfect day, so full are the anticipations of the soul. It is certain (and those who have been frequently at the deathbed of a Christian are well aware of the fact) that when the soul of the just is near to her dismissal from the flesh, the invisible world appears to open on its gaze. It is not, we are persuaded, the fancy of an overwrought brain, nor one of imagination's flights, when the dying Christian thinks himself surrounded by unearthly forms, and permitted, while yet in the flesh, to look within the veil; but we have abundant reason to think that there is nothing but a slight partition between the visible and the invisible, so that it is simply the being pent up in matter which prevents the soul inspecting what passes in the future state; and when the earthly house

of this tabernacle is being dissolved, we can easily suppose that it will look out, as it were, through the apertures, and discern much which had been hid from her by her dwelling-place: as the cottage crumbles away and totters, more light will be admitted through the chinks. The breaking up of the flesh is like making windows in the dungeon, through which the sunshine may enter and the captive enjoy light; and thus is knowledge, which is gradually accumulated, burst in upon by the radiance of light, the fulness of splendour.

MELVILL.

LIV.

OFTEN the clouds of deepest woe
A sweet love-message bear;
Dark though they seem, we cannot find
A frown of anger there.

ANON.



HAPPY DEATHBED SCENES;

AS DESCRIBED BY VARIOUS WRITERS.

LV.

SOME of their holy and zealous lives do determine and expire sweetly, fairly, and gloriously, even like a clear sun in a summer's evening, without any storm or cloud of temptation and discomfort. The darksome and painful passages and pangs of death are enlightened and sweetened with the shining beams of God's glorious presence, and fast embracement of Jesus Christ in the arms of their faith; so that to them the very joys of heaven, and exultations of everlasting rest, mingle themselves with those last agonies and expirations of death. Their heads are, as it were, crowned with immortality and endless peace upon their beds of death. LUTHER, that blessed man of God, died sweetly and triumphantly over Hell, the Pope, and the Devil. "My heavenly Father," said he at his death, "eternal and merciful God, thou hast manifested unto me thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I have taught him; I have known him. I

love him as my life, my health, and my redemption, whom the wicked have persecuted, maligned, and with injury afflicted. Draw my soul to thee." After this, he said as ensues, thrice—"I commend my spirit into thine hands, thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth! God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that all that believe in him should have life everlasting."

Hear how another blessed saint of God, Mr. JOHN HOLLAND, a faithful minister of God's word, ended his days. Having the day before he died continued his meditation and exposition upon the eighth chapter of Romans for the space of two hours or more, on the sudden he said—"Oh! stay your reading. What brightness is this I see? Have you lit up any candles?" To which I answered, "No; it is sunshine (for it was about five o'clock in a clear summer's evening)." "Sunshine?" saith he; "nay, my Saviour-shine. Now farewell, world; welcome, heaven; the daystar from on high hath visited my heart. O speak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral, God dealeth familiarly with man! I feel his mercy, I see his majesty, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God he knoweth; but I see things that are unutterable." So ravished in spirit, he roamed toward heaven with a cheerful look and soft sweet voice, but what he said we could not conceive. With the sun, in the morning following,

raising himself as Jacob did upon his staff, he shut up his blessed life with these words: "Oh, what a happy change shall I make—from night to day; from darkness to light; from death to life; from sorrow to solace; from a factious world to a heavenly being! O my dear brethren, sisters, and friends, it pitieth me to leave you behind. Yet remember my death when I am gone, and what I now feel. I hope you shall find ere you die, that God doth and will deal familiarly with men. And now, thou fiery chariot, that camest down to fetch up Elijah, carry me to my happy home! and all ye blessed angels, who attended the soul of Lazarus to bring it up to heaven, bear me, O bear me, into the bosom of my best beloved! Amen, amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" And so he fell asleep.

That this is true, the reporter and bystander, that ancient, learned, reverend minister of God, Master Legh, addeth: "I say the truth, my brethren, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost."

LVI.

MR. PEACOCK, in the height of his dreadful desertion, told those about him that he conversed with fiends—that the Lord cursed him—that he had no

grace—that it was against the course of God’s proceedings to save him. But when that horrible tempest of spiritual terrors was happily dispersed, and the light of God’s comfortable countenance began to shine again upon his most heavy and afflicted spirit, he disavowed all *inconsiderate speeches*, as he called them, in his temptation, and did humbly and heartily ask mercy of God for them all; and did thus triumph—“What should I extol—the magnificence of God, which is unspeakable, and more than any heart can conceive? Nay, rather, let us with humble reverence acknowledge his great mercy. What great cause have I to magnify the great goodness of God, that hath humbled, nay, rather, exalted, such a wretched miscreant of so base a condition, to an estate so glorious and stately! The Lord hath honoured me with his goodness. I am sure he hath provided a glorious kingdom for me. *The joy which I feel in my heart is incredible.*”

LVII.

SIR ROBERT H. BLOSSET.

THE ordinance being concluded, he requested me to draw my chair close to his couch, at the same time intimating his wish that all others might withdraw. He then most affectionately put out his hand, and

entreated me to pray for him, that he might be delivered from all false confidences. He repeated this injunction with great earnestness. I replied, that God would not disappoint the hope which was founded on the merits of his Son; and that the Scripture was peculiarly adapted to convey comfort to all who, under a trembling sense of their sinfulness, cast themselves on the mercy of God. He replied, "That is true. I am perfectly satisfied on that point. My views are strong and clear. I have no cloud or doubt, and long to be with my God and Saviour. Oh, when will the time come? To this I have looked forward, O God, thou knowest! It does not take me by surprise; I have been preparing for it. For some years I have been endeavouring to withdraw from the world; avoiding as much as possible all new connections, and labouring to be ready for thy summons. I greatly long for my rest."

LVIII.

THE REV. DR. PAYSON.

WHILE speaking of the rapturous views he had of the heavenly world, he was asked if it did not seem almost like the clear light of vision, rather than that of faith. "Oh," he replied, "I don't know; it is too much for the poor eyes of my soul to bear; they are

almost blinded with the excessive brightness. All I want is to be a mirror, to reflect some of the rays to those around me. My soul, instead of growing weaker and more languishing as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body, and to join those around the throne."

A friend with whom he had been conversing on his extreme bodily sufferings and his high spiritual joys, remarked—"I presume it is no longer incredible to you, if ever it was, that martyrs should rejoice and praise God in the flames and on the rack?" "No," he said, "I can easily believe it. I have suffered twenty times—yes, to speak within bounds, twenty times—as much as I could in being burnt at the stake, while my joy in God so abounded as to render my sufferings not only tolerable, but welcome. *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.*"

LIX.

MISS SOPHIA HOARE, Aged Fourteen.

AT about twelve o'clock a most painful and agonizing scene commenced: inward convulsive pangs seized my suffering, afflicted child. Her mind wandered, and she called out she was burning inside. Her face

became convulsed, her eyes fixed; she talked rapidly; and after a most bitter conflict, she triumphed over the enemy of souls, crying out every moment, "Yes, I am in Christ's arms, and I am now in Mamma's arms, and we are both in Christ's arms, and we are going to God's throne." When we prayed for her dismissal, she evidenced the clearness of her reason by joining in every word. Then, naming all around her bed, she fixed her expiring eyes, beaming with tenderness, on me—"I am in Mamma's soft arms; now I am laying my head on Mamma's breast; now I see Christ: there he is!" pointing her little hand upward. "See that star, Mamma—you know it is in the Bible. Now I am coming to Christ; and we shall be with Christ and before Christ's throne." With these words, "I am going to God's throne," her tongue faltered, her eyes closed, the conflict ceased; her happy spirit was dismissed from the suffering body, and she (as she herself said she would) entered into eternal rest. According to her own desire, she was laid from her mother's arms in the arms of Jesus.

LX.

BISHOP JEWELL.

WHEN one of those that stood by prayed, with tears, that if it might stand with God's good pleasure,

he would restore him to former health, Jewell, overhearing him, turned his eyes, as it were offended, and spoke to him in the words of Ambrose: "I have not lived so that I am ashamed to live longer; neither do I fear to die, because we have a merciful Lord. A crown of righteousness is laid up for me; Christ is my righteousness." "Father, let thy will be done—thy will, I say, and not my will, which is imperfect and depraved. O Lord, confound me not! This is my to-day; this day quickly let me come unto thee; this day let me see the Lord Jesus."

With these words, the door was shut by the sound of the grinding, and the daughters of singing were abased; the silver cord lengthened no more; the golden ewer was cracked, and the pitcher broken at the well: yet the keepers, though with much trembling, stood erect; and they that looked out of the windows, though dark, yet were fixed toward heaven; till, after a few fervent inward prayers of devotion and sighs of longing desire, the soul returned to God that gave it.

LXI.

OLYMPIA MORATA, an Italian Lady.

SHE departed with great cheerfulness of mind, and even with the desire of dying; fully persuaded

that she was about to be called hence from her daily sufferings to never-ending felicity. Having previously raised herself from a kind of slumber, an inexpressibly sweet smile appeared to play on her features. "Approaching much nearer, I inquired," said her husband, "the reason of her apparent happiness. She replied, 'I distinctly behold a place filled with ineffable light.' Unable to discourse much, on account of her weakness, I said, 'Be of good courage; for you, my beloved wife, will hereafter dwell in that kingdom of light.' With a smile on her countenance, she seemed to assent to its truth. A little while after she said, 'I am perfectly happy.' Nor did she speak again, excepting when the pupil of her eye began to grow dim. She then confessed she could no longer recognize her friends. This was, indeed, her last observation; for soon after she breathed forth her spirit, having apparently fallen into a sweet slumber."

LXII.

REV. SAMUEL WALKER.

"I HAVE a perfect satisfaction in the principles which I have preached, and in the methods which I have taken in general. I have no doubt respecting my state in Christ, or respecting my future glory.

Behold, I am going down to the gates of the grave, and holy angels wait for me. Why do you trouble yourselves, and weep; cannot ye rejoice with me? I am going to heaven; Christ died, my Lord, Had I strength to express myself, I could tell you that which would make your hearts leap for joy. God is all love to me, and my trials are very slight."

LXIII.

DR. BATEMAN.

HE conversed with the greatest animation all the day, and almost all the night, preceding his death, principally on the joys of heaven, and the glorious change he was soon to experience; often exclaiming, "What a happy hour will the hour of death be!" He dwelt much on the description of the New Jerusalem, in the Revelation of St. John. Once in the night he said to his mother, "Surely you are not in tears! Mine is a case that calls for rejoicing, and not for sorrow. Only think what it will be to drop this poor, frail, perishing body, and go to the glories that are set before me!"

He said, suddenly, "I surely must be going now, my strength sinks so fast. I have almost lost the power of moving my limbs;" and on making some

observation on the glorious prospect before him, he added, "Oh, yes! I GLAD to go, if it be the Lord's will." He shut his eyes and lay quite composed, and by and by said, "What glory! the angels are waiting for me." Then, after another interval of quiet, added, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul"; and to those who were about him, "Farewell!" These were the last words he spoke; he gradually and gently sunk away, and in about ten minutes breathed his last.

LXIV.

REV. JOHN JANEWAY.

ACCORDING to his desire, most of his time was spent in praise; and he would still be crying out, "More praise still! O help me to praise him! I have nothing else to do, I have nothing else to do. I have done with prayer, and all other ordinances. I have almost done with conversing with mortals. I shall presently be beholding Christ himself, that died for me, and loved me, and washed me in his blood. I shall in a few hours be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon Mount Zion, with an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. I shall

hear the voice of much people, and be among them which say, ‘Hallelujah! salvation, glory, honour, and power, unto the Lord our God! And again we say, Hallelujah!’ Methinks I stand, as it were, one foot in heaven and the other on earth. Methinks I hear the melody of heaven; and by faith I see the angels waiting to carry my soul to the bosom of Jesus; and I shall be for ever with the Lord in glory. And who can but rejoice in all this?”

LXV.

RICHARD HOOKER.

ON being required by Dr. Saravia, on the day of his death, when in deep contemplation and not inclinable to discourse, to say what were his present thoughts, he replied, that “he was meditating the nature and number of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and O that it might be so on earth!” After which words, he said, “I have lived to see this world is made up of perturbations, and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near. Though I have by his grace loved him in my youth, and feared him in mine age, and

laboured to have a conscience void of offence to him and to all men ; yet if thou, O Lord ! be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it ? And therefore, where I have failed, Lord, show mercy to me ; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness for His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be a terrible, and then I take thine own time ; I submit to it : let not mine, O Lord, but let thy will be done." With which expressions he fell into a dangerous illness—dangerous as to his recovery ; yet recover he did, but it was only to speak these few words : " Good doctor, God hath heard my daily petitions, for I am at peace with all men, and he is at peace with me ; and from that blessed assurance I feel that inward joy which the world can neither give nor take away. My conscience beareth me this witness, and this witness maketh the thoughts of death joyful. I could wish to live, to do the Church more service ; but cannot hope for it, for my days are past as a shadow that returns not." More he would have spoken, but his spirit failed him ; and after a short conflict between nature and death, a quiet sigh put a period to his last breath ; and so he fell asleep.

LXVI.

JOHN HOWARD.

WHILST in the enjoyment of health, it had been Mr. Howard's frequent, indeed his almost daily custom, at a certain hour to visit his friend Admiral Priestman, who resided at Cherson, and who, on finding that he failed in his usual calls, went to see him some days after he had been totally confined to his house, and found him weak and ill, sitting before a stove in his bedroom. On inquiring after his health, he replied, that his end was approaching very fast, that he had several things to say, and thanked him for having called. The Admiral, concluding from his answers that he was in a melancholy mood, endeavoured to turn the conversation, imagining the whole or the principal part of his disorder might be the mere effect of low spirits. Mr. Howard, however, assured him that it was not; and added, in a very impressive yet cheerful manner, "Priestman, you style this a dull conversation, and endeavour to divert my mind from dwelling upon death: but I entertain very different sentiments. Death has no terrors for me—it is an event I always look to with cheerfulness, if not with pleasure; and be assured, the subject is more grateful than any other. I am well aware that I have but a short time to live; my mode of life has rendered it

impossible that I should get rid of this fever." Then, turning from that subject, he spoke of his funeral, and cheerfully gave orders where he would be buried. "There is a spot," said he, "near the village of Dauphiny; this would suit me nicely. You know it well, for I have often said I should like to be buried there; and let me beg of you, as you value your old friend, not to suffer any pomp to be used at my funeral, nor any monument nor monumental inscription whatever to mark where I am laid, but let me lay me quietly in the earth; place a sundial over my grave, and let me be forgotten."

LXVII.

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

HE continued for about eleven months confined to his room, calmly looking for his expected dismissal, of which he would sometimes speak with his usual pleasantry. "I am," said he, "like a person going a journey in a stage coach, who expects its arrival every hour, and is frequently looking out at the window for it;" and at another time, to the inquiry how he was, he replied, "I am packed and sealed, and ready for the post." His mind was generally tranquil, though at times during his illness his spirits were low, and

his religious comforts suffered some degree of interruption: but "he knew in whom he had believed"; and when speaking to a friend on the subject of believers' doubts and fears, he observed that he could not give place to fear, and believed he never should while those words were in the Bible, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

LXVIII.

BISHOP PORTEUS.

HE was himself, indeed, strongly impressed with the conviction that his end was fast approaching; and he contemplated the event with all that calm composed resignation which nothing can inspire but a deep sense of piety, and a devout religious submission to the will of God. "On Thursday, the 10th of May (1808), I saw him," says the writer of this account, "for the last time; and never can I forget the affecting solemnity of voice and look and manner in which he begged my earnest prayers for his early and easy release. He said little more to me, for his mind seemed wholly absorbed in the near prospect of an eternal world. The following day he was, at his own desire, removed to Fulham; and for a short time the change of air and scene appeared to cheer

and exhilarate him. As he sat the next morning in his library, near the window, the brightness of a fine spring day called up a transient glow into his countenance, and he several times exclaimed, 'O that glorious sun!' Afterwards, while sitting at dinner, he was seized with some slight convulsions, which were happily of short duration, and he then fell into a gentle sleep. From that time, however, he never spoke, and scarcely could be said to move without a pang or sigh. By a transition so easy as only to be known by a pressure of his hand upon the knee of the servant who was sitting near him, the spirit of this great and good man fled from its earthly mansion to the realms of peace."

LXIX.

THE REV. HENRY MARTYN.

ON October 6th the following words, while on a journey to Constantinople, appear in his diary, and they are probably the last he penned: "No horses being to be had, I had an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard, and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God—in solitude my company, my friend and comforter! O when shall time give place to eternity? when shall appear that new heaven and

earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness? There, there shall in no wise enter in anything that defileth: none of that wickedness that has made man worse than wild beasts, none of those corruptions that add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard."

Scarcely had Mr. Martyn breathed these aspirations after that state of blissful purity for which he had attained such a measure of meetness, when he was called to exchange a condition of pain, weakness, and suffering, for that everlasting rest which remaineth for the people of God. At Jocat, 16th October, 1812, either falling a sacrifice to the plague, which then raged there, or sinking under that disorder which, when he penned his last words, had so greatly reduced him, he surrendered his soul into the hands of his Redeemer.

LXX.

THE REV. C. SIMEON.

"It is," said he, "upon the broad, grand principles of the gospel that I repose: it is not upon any particular promise here or there—any little portions of the word, which some people seem to take comfort from—but I wish to look at the grand whole, at the vast

scheme of redemption as from eternity to eternity." Then, after speaking of his bodily weakness, and the effect it might have on his spiritual feelings, he added, "But however that may be, I wish to point out this distinction in my case—that I am not so much solicitous about this feeling or that, or this state or that, as upon keeping before me the grand purposes of Jehovah from eternity to eternity. Now I wish to be able to go out to take a good walk; so also, in my soul, I might wish to go forth and survey all the glories of heaven, and the blessedness of that place: there might, however, be something in all that to be suspected. But in taking the great revelation of himself which God has given us, there I rest upon him, and not upon myself. I do not depend upon feelings and thoughts, which are changing and uncertain, but I am kept by Him who changes not. I quote the passage, 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' Yes; that is the true view of the matter, as it appears to me: for, after all, what are man's prayers and thoughts before him? It cannot depend upon a few poor, broken, puling words; nor do I depend upon them. But again I say, I take the glorious and majestic discoveries which God has made to me of himself, and there I rest." He then added, smiling as he used to do when he would qualify any strong statement,

about which he himself had no doubt—"I may be wrong in my view; though I think I am not." Then, very solemnly and slowly, "But however, this I know, that I am a poor lost and vile sinner; yea, the chief of sinners, and the greatest monument of God's mercy: and I know I cannot be wrong here."

For a day or two after this his whole mind seemed engaged in perfecting a scheme for four sermons upon that passage (Ephes. iii. 18, 19), "That you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God." "This," said he, "is the grandest subject I can conceive for a course of sermons; and I should think a life well spent, even out of heaven, to write and deliver sermons upon this subject in a manner worthy of it." He then dictated with remarkable precision the outlines for sermons upon this text.

After this he was harassed at times with the most acute pains, all of which he bore with uniform patience and unusual gentleness. Once, indeed, when he expressed his surprise that he should be so long in dying, I quoted these texts—"I will wait all my appointed time;" "He will make all thy bed in thy sickness;" "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." And

then one of his own expressions, "All ordered in infinite wisdom and unbounded love." He immediately replied, in a very affecting and striking way, "and that is quite sufficient for me." His pain, after this, was so violent at times that we did not venture to obtrude upon him any remarks of our own; and he was hourly becoming too weak to articulate anything beyond a few short words. The last words I addressed to him were on Friday, November 11: his hands were extended on the bed, his eyes closed, and his head supported on one side of the pillow. I gently took his withered hand in mine, and then solemnly pronounced the benediction—"The Lord bless thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." He faintly endeavoured to say, "Amen"; and after that he spoke no more.

LXXI.

THE LADY FRANCES, COUNTESS OF CARBERY.

SHE had in her sickness, if I may so call it (or rather, in the solemnities and graver preparations towards death), some curious and well becoming fears concerning the final state of her soul; but from hence she passed into a delirium, or a kind of trance; and as soon as she came forth of it, as if it had

been a vision, or that she had conversed with an angel, and from his hand had received a label or scroll of the *Book of Life*, and there seen her name enrolled, she cried out aloud, "Glory be to God on high; now I am sure I shall be saved"—concerning which manner of discoursing we are wholly ignorant what judgment can be made; but certainly there are strange things in the other world, and so there are in all the immediate preparations to it; and a little glimpse of heaven, a minute's conversing with an angel, any ray of God, any communication extraordinary from the Spirit of comfort, which God gives to his servants in strange and unknown manners, are infinitely far from illusions; and they shall then be understood by us, when we feel them, and when our new and strange needs shall be refreshed by such unusual visitations.



EJACULATIONS, ETC.

LOOK graciously upon me, O Lord, I beseech thee, in the time of my approaching dissolution; and the more the outward man decayeth, strengthen me so much the more continually by thy grace and Holy Spirit in the inner man! Give me unfeigned repentance for all the errors of my life past, and a steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus, that my sins may be done away by thy mercy, and my pardon sealed in heaven, before I go hence and be no more seen.

In my last hour, O Lord, I humbly beg thy protection from the busy suggestions and direful insultings of my grand enemies, the devil and his angels. O let not then my faith fail, or my hope wither, or my charity wax cold with the waning flesh; but when all my joints shall tremble by the batteries of death, mine eyes be darkened and my tongue falter—then, O then, let my heart be enlarged towards my God; waiting upon thee, longing for

thee, and incessantly praying, Show me thy mercy,
O Lord, and grant me thy salvation!

“HAVE mercy upon me, O God, and consider the trouble I suffer of them that hate me; my spirit is troubled for the daily incursions of my ghostly enemies.” “Thou hast lifted me up from the gates of death.” Such is this frail mortal life, all the ways whereof are vanity and iniquity, even gates leading to death eternal, from which I humbly beg to be raised up and exalted by thy right hand; “that I may show all thy praises within the ports of the daughter of Sion, and glorify thee with thy Church triumphant in heaven.” “I will rejoice in thy salvation.” To be thus lifted up and saved, is a joy unspeakable and glorious.

“Remember me, O Lord, according to the favour thou bearest unto thy people, and visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance.”

“Forsake me not, O Lord my God! be not thou far from me.”

“Haste thee to help me, O Lord God of my salvation.”

"Give ear, Lord, to my prayer ; ponder the voice of my humble desires."

"Fear the Lord, O my soul ! fear the Lord, and depart from evil."

"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

"Thy lovingkindness is ever before mine eyes ; and I will walk in thy truth."

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

"The Lord is my light, and my salvation ; whom then shall I fear?"

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

"Blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted."

If you awake in the night (says Bishop Jeremy Taylor), fill up the intervals or spaces of your not sleeping by holy thoughts and aspirations.



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